TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1927

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1927

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

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CONTENTS

	Page
List of Full Page Illustrations and Maps	4
List of Lessons	5–6
List of Home Daily Bible Readings	7–11
Introduction	13–28
Suggestion to Teachers	13–19
Is the Church School Making Good?	13
A Crusade in Which Church School Teachers Should Enlist	14
The Teacher that Boys Like Best	15
The Teacher that Girls Like Best	15
The Teacher that Young People and Adults Like Best	16
Studies in The Christian Life	17
The Influence of Christ upon the Life of Peter	18
Early Kings and Prophets of Israel from Samuel to Isaiah	18
The Books in the Course	19–28
The Books of Samuel	19–20
Their Title and Date	19
Their Contents	20
The Books as Literature	20
Their Lessons for Today	20
The First Book of Kings	20–21
Its Title and Date	20
Its Contents	20
The Book as Literature	21
Its Lessons for Today	21
The Book of Amos	21–23
The Prophet Amos	21
The Date of the Book	22
The Message of the Book	22
The Book as Literature	23
Its Lessons for Today	23
The Book of Hosea	23–25
The Prophet Hosea	23
The Times	24
The Contents of the Book	24
The Message of Hosea	24
Amos and Hosea Compared	25
The Book as Literature	25
Its Lessons for Today	25
The Book of Micah	25–26
The Prophet Micah	25
The Date of the Book of Micah	26
To Whom the Prophet Spoke	26
His Message	26
Contents of the Book	26
The Book as Literature	26
Its Lessons for Today	26
The Book of Isaiah	27–28
The Authorship of the Book	27
The Prophet Isaiah and his Message	27
The Book as Literature	28
Its Lessons for Today	28
Lessons for 1927	29–415
First Quarter	29–135
Second Quarter	136–232
Third Quarter	233–323
Fourth Quarter	324–415

383.122

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

In Full Page Reproduction

Hosea. Tissot . . . . . *Frontispiece*
Measuring Grain in Bethlehem. . . . . *Facing* 40
The Three-Talent, Two-Talent and One-Talent Men. Eugène Burnand *Facing* 76
Christ and the Fishermen. Ernst Zimmerman . . . . . *Facing* 136
The Temple in the Time of Christ . . . . . *Facing* 194
Peter. T. König . . . . . *Facing* 224
Jezebel. George J. Tobirz . . . . . *Facing* 342
Rabshakeh. José Villegas . . . . . *Facing* 400

LARGE MAPS

Palestine in the Time of David and Solomon . . . . . *Facing* 234
The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah . . . . . *Facing* 314

LESSONS FOR 1927

FIRST QUARTER

JANUARY—MARCH

Studies in the Christian Life

Lesson				Page
I.	Jan.	2	The Christian a Follower of Jesus ...Mark 1.16-20; 2.13-17; 1 John 2.6*	29
II.	Jan.	9	The Standard of Christian Living ...Luke 6.27-38	38
III.	Jan.	16	The Christian's Use of the Bible ..Deuteronomy 6.4-9; 2 Timothy 3.14-17	47
IV.	Jan.	23	Prayer in the Christian Life ... .Mark 1.35; 14.32-36; Matthew 6.9-13	56
V.	Jan.	30	The Christian Overcoming Temptation .....Luke 4.1-13; 1 Corinthians 10.12, 13	66
VI.	Feb.	6	The Practice of Christian Stewardship.Matt. 23.19-20; 25.14-30	75
VII.	Feb.	13	Making Our Homes Christian .....Ephesians 5.25 to 6.4....	83
VIII.	Feb.	20	Serving In and Through the Church .Matthew 5.13-16; Acts 2.42-47	91
IX.	Feb.	27	Making the Community Christian (Temperance Lesson) .....Galatians 5.13-25.....	99
X.	Mar.	6	Sharing the Good News.....Acts 8.4-8; 2 Corinthians 5.14-20	108
XI.	Mar.	13	Making the World Christian .....Matthew 28.16-20; Acts 16.6-15	116
XII.	Mar.	20	The Christian's Hope .....John 14.1-3; 2 Corinthians 5.1-10; 1 John 3.2, 3	125
XIII.	Mar.	27	Review: Studies in the Christian Life	134

SECOND QUARTER

APRIL—JUNE

The Life and Letters of Peter

I.	Apr.	3	Peter Becomes a Disciple of Jesus ..Mark 1.14-18, 29-31....	136
II.	Apr.	10	Peter's Lesson in Trust .....Matthew 14.22-33	144
III.	Apr.	17	Peter's Great Confession .....Matthew 16.13-24	152
IV.	Apr.	24	Peter at the Transfiguration .....Mark 9.2-10; 2 Peter 1.16-18	161
V.	May	1	Peter's Denial and Repentance .....Mark 14.53, 54, 66-71; Luke 22.61, 62	170
VI.	May	8	Peter and the Risen Lord .....John 20.1-10; 21.1-23...	178
VII.	May	15	Peter at Pentecost .....Acts 2	185
VIII.	May	22	Peter Heals the Lame Man .....Acts 3.1 to 4.31.....	193
IX.	May	29	Peter Undaunted by Persecution ...Acts 5.17-42	202
X.	June	5	Peter Preaching to Gentiles .....Acts, Chapters 10 and 11	209
XI.	June	12	Peter Delivered from Prison .....Acts 12.1-17	217
XII.	June	19	Peter Teaches Good Citizenship (Temperance Lesson) .....1 Peter 2.11-17; 4.1-5..	224
XIII.	June	26	Review: Life and Letters of Peter	231

* In this list the entire lesson text is given. With the treatment of each lesson only that portion is printed which has been selected by the Lesson Committee.

THIRD QUARTER

JULY—SEPTEMBER

Early Kings and Prophets of Israel: from Samuel to Rehoboam

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

Lesson					Page
I.	July	3	Saul Chosen King	1 Samuel, Chapters 9 to 11	233
II.	July	10	Samuel's Farewell	1 Samuel 12	241
III.	July	17	Samuel Anoints David	1 Samuel 16.1-13	248
IV.	July	24	David and Goliath	1 Samuel 17	255
V.	July	31	David and Jonathan	1 Samuel 18.1-4; 19.1-7; 20.1-42; 23.15-18; 2 Samuel 1.17-27	263
VI.	Aug.	7	David Spares Saul	1 Samuel 26	270
VII.	Aug.	14	David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem	2 Samuel 2.1-4; 5.1-5; 6.1-15; Psalm 24	277
VIII.	Aug.	21	God's Promise to David	1 Chronicles 17	286
IX.	Aug.	28	Nathan Leads David to Repentance	2 Samuel 11.1 to 12.25	292
X.	Sept.	4	Solomon's Wise Choice	1 Kings 3.4-15	299
XI.	Sept.	11	Solomon Dedicates the Temple	1 Kings 8	306
XII.	Sept.	18	The Kingdom Divided	1 Kings 12.1-24	314
XIII.	Sept.	25	Review: The Early Kings of Israel		322

FOURTH QUARTER

OCTOBER—DECEMBER

Early Kings and Prophets of Israel: from Elijah to Isaiah

(Second Half of a Six Months' Course)

I.	Oct.	2	Elijah on Mount Carmel	1 Kings 18	324
II.	Oct.	9	Elijah Hears God's Voice	1 Kings 19	332
III.	Oct.	16	Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard	1 Kings 21	340
IV.	Oct.	23	The Call of the Prophet	1 Kings 19.19, 20; Amos 7.10-15; Isaiah 6.1-8	347
V.	Oct.	30	Amos Denounces Sin (World's Temperance Sunday)	Amos 2.4 to 3.15	355
VI.	Nov.	6	Amos Pleads for Justice	Amos, Chapters 5 and 7.	362
VII.	Nov.	13	Hosea Preaches God's Love	Hosea, Chapters 6, 11, and 14	369
VIII.	Nov.	20	Micah Champions the Oppressed	Micah, Chapters 2, 3, 6 and 7.1-6	376
IX.	Nov.	27	Isaiah Teaches True Worship	Isaiah 1.1-20	383
X.	Dec.	4	Isaiah Teaches Right Living	Isaiah 3.1 to 5.30	391
XI.	Dec.	11	Isaiah Counsels Rulers	Isaiah, Chapters 7, 31, 36 and 37	399
XII.	Dec.	18	Review: The Early Prophets of Israel		407
XIII.	Dec.	25	Christmas Lesson	Luke 2.1-20	409

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE

FIRST QUARTER

I. Dec. 27. Mark 1.16-20. FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.
Dec. 28. Acts 9.1-9. DISCIPLESHIP ACCEPTED.
Dec. 29. Mt. 19.16-26. DISCIPLESHIP REFUSED.
Dec. 30. John 15.1-10. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.
Dec. 31. Mt. 10.34-42. SUPREME LOVE FOR CHRIST.
Jan. 1. Mt. 19.23-30. DISCIPLES REWARDED.
Jan. 2. Phil. 2.5-11. CHRIST BECOMING A SERVANT.

II. Jan. 3. Luke 6.27-38. LOVE AND FORGIVENESS FOR ENEMIES.
Jan. 4. 1 John 3.13-24. LOVE AND THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.
Jan. 5. 1 Cor. 9.19-23. UNSELFISHNESS IN SERVICE.
Jan. 6. Rom. 14.16 to 15.3. LOVE AND SELF-DENIAL.
Jan. 7. 1 Cor. 13. THE PREËMINENCE OF LOVE.
Jan. 8. Luke 23.32-43. CHRIST PRACTICING HIS TEACHING.
Jan. 9. Mt. 5.1-10. CONDITIONS OF BLESSING.

III. Jan. 10. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. TEACHING THE BIBLE TO CHILDREN.
Jan. 11. Acts 8.29-38. THE BIBLE IN PERSONAL WORK.
Jan. 12. Neh. 8.1-8. BIBLE READING IN PUBLIC.
Jan. 13. 2 Kings 22.10-20. THE BIBLE AND CONVICTION.
Jan. 14. Luke 4.1-15. THE BIBLE AND TEMPTATION.
Jan. 15. Mt. 7.24-29. THE BIBLE AND CHARACTER-BUILDING.
Jan. 16. Psalm 119.9-16. THE CLEANSING POWER OF THE WORD.

IV. Jan. 17. Mark 14.32-36. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS.
Jan. 18. Luke 11.5-13. ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER.
Jan. 19. Mt. 6.5-15. SECRET PRAYER.
Jan. 20. Psalm 51.1-12. PRAYER OF PENITENCE.
Jan. 21. Luke 18.1-8. IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER.
Jan. 22. Rom. 8.26-30. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER.
Jan. 23. Psalm 63.1-8. DAVID'S EARNEST PRAYER.

V. Jan. 24. Luke 4.1-13. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.
Jan. 25. 1 Cor. 10.1-13. ESCAPING TEMPTATION.
Jan. 26. Prov. 1.10-19. WITHSTANDING TEMPTATION.
Jan. 27. Mark 14.32-42. PRAYER AND TEMPTATION.
Jan. 28. Eph. 6.10-20. FORTIFYING AGAINST TEMPTATION.
Jan. 29. Dan. 1.8-16. DANIEL'S VICTORY.
Jan. 30. Rom. 8.31-39. CHRIST OUR INTERCESSOR.

VI. Jan. 31. Mt. 25.14-30. PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.
Feb. 1. Psalm 50.1-12. GOD THE OWNER OF ALL.
Feb. 2. Mal. 3.7-12. RECOGNIZING GOD'S CLAIMS.
Feb. 3. Prov. 3.1-10. STEWARDSHIP REWARDED.
Feb. 4. 2 Cor. 8.1-9. IDEAL STEWARDS OF MONEY.
Feb. 5. 1 Peter 4.7-11. STEWARDSHIP OF GRACE.
Feb. 6. 2 Cor. 9.6-15. GIVING CHEERFULLY.

VII. Feb. 7. Eph. 5.25 to 6.4. MAKING OUR HOMES CHRISTIAN.
Feb. 8. Dt. 6.4-12. TEACHING CHILDREN THE BIBLE.
Feb. 9. Prov. 3.1-10. PROMISES TO GODLY CHILDREN.
Feb. 10. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. TIMOTHY'S TRAINING.
Feb. 11. John 11.1-6. THE HOME OF LAZARUS.
Feb. 12. Gen. 18.16-21. ABRAHAM'S HOUSEHOLD.
Feb. 13. 1 Cor. 13. LOVE SUPREME.

VIII. Feb. 14. Acts 2.42-47. SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH.
Feb. 15. Acts 13.1-12. SPIRIT-PROMPTED SERVICE.
Feb. 16. Isa. 52.1-12. EXALTED WORK OF THE CHURCH.
Feb. 17. Acts 1.1-11. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITNESSING.
Feb. 18. Mt. 18.15-20. PROMOTING HARMONY IN THE CHURCH.
Feb. 19. Col. 1.9-23. CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.
Feb. 20. Eph. 3.14-21. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH.

IX. Feb. 21. Gal. 5.13-25. MAKING THE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN.
Feb. 22. Gal. 6.1-10. RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS.
Feb. 23. Rom. 13.1-10. LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.
Feb. 24. Rom. 14.13-23. THE HIGHEST GOOD.
Feb. 25. Acts 19.18-22. GIVING UP SIN.
Feb. 26. Rev. 21.1-8. THE HEAVENLY IDEAL.
Feb. 27. Eph. 6.10-20. PROTECTION AGAINST ENEMIES.

X. Feb. 28. 2 Cor. 5.14-20. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS.
Mar. 1. Mt. 28.16-20. THE GREAT COMMISSION.

	Mar.	2. 1 Cor. 1.18-25. The Purpose of Preaching.
	Mar.	3. 1 Cor. 2.1-10. Paul's Example.
	Mar.	4. 1 Thess. 2.1-12. The Minister's Spirit.
	Mar.	5. Psalm 126. The Sower's Reward.
	Mar.	6. Isa. 55.1-7. The Gracious Invitation.
XI.	Mar.	7. Acts 16.6-15. Making the World Christian.
	Mar.	8. Acts 1.1-11. Power for Evangelizing.
	Mar.	9. Psalm 72.8-19. World Conquest Prophesied.
	Mar.	10. Luke 10.1-9. Prayer for Workers.
	Mar.	11. Acts 17.22-31. Paul's Appeal to the Heathen.
	Mar.	12. Acts 9.32-35. The Success of Missions.
	Mar.	13. Isa. 60.1-5. The Enlargement of the Church.
XII.	Mar.	14. John 14.1-10. The Christian's Hope.
	Mar.	15. 2 Cor. 5.1-10. Our Heavenly Home.
	Mar.	16. Mt. 25.31-40. Heaven a Reward.
	Mar.	17. John 10.1-9. The Way to Heaven.
	Mar.	18. Rev. 22.1-7. A Preview of Heaven.
	Mar.	19. Rev. 22.10-17. The Universal Invitation.
	Mar.	20. Rev. 21.1-7. The New Jerusalem.
XIII.	Mar.	21. 1 Cor. 13. The Greatest Grace.
	Mar.	22. Psalm 19. The Excellency of the Bible.
	Mar.	23. Mt. 6.5-15. Effective Praying.
	Mar.	24. Dt. 8.11-20. Forgetting God.
	Mar.	25. Lev. 26.3-13. Obedience and Prosperity.
	Mar.	26. Acts 10.1-8. A Devout Household.
	Mar.	27. Rev. 7.9-17. Heaven a Place of Service.

SECOND QUARTER

I.	Mar.	28. Mark 1.14-20. Peter Becomes a Disciple of Jesus.
	Mar.	29. John 1.35-42. Andrew Finds Peter.
	Mar.	30. Luke 5.1-11. A Fisher of Men.
	Mar.	31. Luke 14.25-35. The Cost of Discipleship.
	Apr.	1. Mt. 10.5-15. The Work of the Disciple.
	Apr.	2. Josh. 24.14-25. Making the Great Decision.
	Apr.	3. Isa. 55.1-5. The Gracious Invitation.
II.	Apr.	4. Mt. 14.22-33. Peter's Lesson in Trust.
	Apr.	5. 2 Kings 6.1-7. The Floating Axe.
	Apr.	6. Jonah 1.4-16. Jonah in a Storm.
	Apr.	7. Acts 27.27-44. Paul in a Storm.
	Apr.	8. Heb. 6.13-20. Hope the Anchor of the Soul.
	Apr.	9. Psalm 31.1-14. Trusting in Jehovah.
	Apr.	10. Psalm 91.1-10. The Security of the Godly.
III.	Apr.	11. Mt. 16.13-24. Peter's Great Confession.
	Apr.	12. John 4.20-29. A Woman's Confession.
	Apr.	13. Acts 4.13-22. Courageous Confession.
	Apr.	14. 1 Cor. 3.1-11. The Sure Foundation.
	Apr.	15. Isa. 28.14-22. The Precious Corner-Stone.
	Apr.	16. 1 Peter 2.1-10. Living Stones.
	Apr.	17. Psalm 34.1-8. Magnifying the Lord.
IV.	Apr.	18. Mark 9.2-10. Peter at the Transfiguration.
	Apr.	19. 2 Peter 1.12-21. The Testimony of Peter.
	Apr.	20. John 5.30-40. The Witness of the Father.
	Apr.	21. John 12.23-32. The Voice from Heaven.
	Apr.	22. 2 Cor. 3.7-18. The Glory of the Lord.
	Apr.	23. Rev. 1.9-18. The Glorified Savior.
	Apr.	24. Isa. 6.1-8. A Glorious Vision.
V.	Apr.	25. Mark 14.53-62. Peter Following Afar Off.
	Apr.	26. Luke 22.31-40. Peter Warned against Temptation.
	Apr.	27. Mark 14.63-72. Peter's Denial and Repentance.
	Apr.	28. Isa. 53.1-12. Despised and Rejected.
	Apr.	29. Prov. 4.10-19. Avoiding Temptation.
	Apr.	30. 2 Cor. 7.1-10. Godly Sorrow Worketh Repentance.
	May	1. Psalm 51.1-9. The Penitent's Prayer.
VI.	May	2. John 20.1-10. Peter at the Lord's Tomb.
	May	3. John 21.1-14. Jesus and the Seven by the Sea.
	May	4. John 21.15-23. Peter Tried and Commissioned.
	May	5. 1 Cor. 15.1-10. Peter a Witness of the Resurrection.
	May	6. Luke 24.36-49. Jesus Appears to the Eleven.
	May	7. Acts 1.1-14. Jesus Commissions the Disciples.
	May	8. 1 Peter 1.3-12. Our Hope.
VII.	May	9. Acts 2.14-21. Peter's Sermon at Pentecost.
	May	10. Acts 2.22-36. Peter's Sermon at Pentecost.
	May	11. Acts 2.37-47. The Result of Peter's Sermon.
	May	12. John 16.7-15. The Promise of the Holy Spirit.
	May	13. 1 Cor. 12.1-11. Spiritual Gifts.
	May	14. 2 Peter 1.1-11. Precious Promises.
	May	15. Phil. 2.5-11. The Acceptable Spirit.
VIII.	May	16. Acts 3.1-10. The Lame Man Healed.

May 17. Acts 4.1-12. Peter's Defense before the Sanhedrin.
May 18. Isa. 35.1-10. The Lame shall Leap.
May 19. Acts 9.32-35. Æneas Healed.
May 20. James 5.13-20. Christian Helpfulness.
May 21. Mark 11.20-25. Strength from God.
May 22. Isa. 35.1-10. The Glory of Zion.

IX. May 23. Acts 5.17-26. The Apostles Persecuted.
May 24. Acts 5.32-42. The Apostles Beaten.
May 25. Mt. 10.16-25. The Disciple not above his Master.
May 26. 1 Peter 3.8-22. Suffering for Righteousness' Sake.
May 27. 1 Peter 4.12-19. Partakers of Christ's Sufferings.
May 28. Mt. 5.1-12. Rejoicing in Persecution.
May 29. Psalm 27.1-6. Security in Jehovah.

X. May 30. Acts 10.34-48. Peter Preaching to Cornelius.
May 31. Acts 11.19-26. The Gentile Church at Antioch.
June 1. John 4.1-14. Jesus and the Gentile Woman.
June 2. Rom. 10.11-21. Salvation for All.
June 3. Eph. 3.1-13. Partakers of the Gospel.
June 4. Gal. 3.1-14. Children of Abraham.
June 5. Psalm 67.1-7. The Gospel for All Nations.

XI. June 6. Acts 12.5-17. Peter Delivered from Prison.
June 7. Psalm 121. The Safety of the Godly.
June 8. Psalm 97. God Delivers his Own.
June 9. 1 Kings 17.1-9. Divine Care.
June 10. 2 Kings 6.8-19. Elisha Delivered.
June 11. Dan. 6.14-23. Daniel Delivered from the Lions.
June 12. Psalm 34.1-8. The Guardian Angel.

XII. June 13. 1 Peter 2.11-20. Peter Teaches Good Citizenship.
June 14. 1 Peter 4.1-11. Abstinence from Evil.
June 15. Gal. 6.7-16. Fruits of Flesh and Spirit.
June 16. Titus 2.1-15. Denying Ungodliness.
June 17. Rom. 12.9-21. Overcoming Evil with Good.
June 18. Mt. 26.36-44. On Guard.
June 19. Psalm 146.1-10. God's Care for the Needy.

XIII. June 20. 1 Peter 5.1-11. Life and Letters of Peter.
June 21. John 1.35-42. Peter Becomes a Disciple of Jesus.
June 22. Mt. 16.13-24. Peter's Great Confession.
June 23. Acts 2.14-21. Peter's Sermon at Pentecost.
June 24. 2 Peter 1.1-11. Peter Exhorts to Faith and Good Works.
June 25. 2 Peter 3.8-18. Peter's Final Warning.
June 26. Isa. 55.6-13. The Happiness of Believers.

THIRD QUARTER

I. June 27. 1 Sam. 8.1-9. Jehovah Rejected.
June 28. Dt. 17.14-20. Jehovah's Choice of a King.
June 29. 1 Sam. 10.17-25. Saul Chosen King.
June 30. 1 Sam. 13.5-14. The King's Folly.
July 1. 1 Sam. 15.13-23. Saul Rejected.
July 2. Mark 12.28-34. Discerning Christ's Kingdom.
July 3. Psalm 119.1-8. Learning Jehovah's Law.

II. July 4. 1 Sam. 3.1-10. Jehovah Calls Samuel.
July 5. 1 Sam. 3.11-21. Samuel a Prophet.
July 6. 1 Sam. 7.3-12. Samuel Interceding for Israel.
July 7. 1 Sam. 12.6-18. Admonishing the People.
July 8. 1 Sam. 12.1-5, 19-25. Samuel's Farewell.
July 9. Acts 20.22-35. An Apostle's Farewell.
July 10. Psalm 26.1-8. A Life of Integrity.

III. July 11. Psalm 89.19-37. Jehovah Chooses David as King.
July 12. 1 Sam. 16.1-13. Samuel Anoints David.
July 13. Ezek. 34.20-31. My Servant David.
July 14. 1 Sam. 16.14-23. The Ministry of Music.
July 15. Isa. 11.1-10. Christ's Kingdom Foretold.
July 16. 2 Tim. 2.14-26. Consecration of Youth.
July 17. Prov. 3.1-6. Loving Jehovah's Law.

IV. July 18. 1 Sam. 17.31-40. David and Goliath.
July 19. 1 Sam. 17.41-51. A Victory of Faith.
July 20. Psalm 54.1-7. A Prayer for Defense.
July 21. 2 Kings 19.14-19. A Prayer for Deliverance.
July 22. Psalm 44.1-8. God's Deliverance.
July 23. Matt. 4.1-11. Jesus and the Tempter.
July 24. Psalm 27.1-5. Fearless Trust in Jehovah.

V. July 25. 1 Sam. 18.1-9. David and Jonathan.
July 26. Gen. 44.25-34. A Father's Love for his Son.
July 27. 1 Sam. 18.12-21. Wearing Friendship as a Mask.
July 28. 1 Sam. 20.12-23. The Test of Friendship.
July 29. 2 Sam. 9.1-13. Love Stronger than Death.
July 30. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. Love Characterized.
July 31. John 15.9-17. The Divine Friendship.

VI. Aug. 1. 1 Sam. 26.1-6. Saul Pursuing David.
Aug. 2. 1 Sam. 26.7-14. David Spares Saul.
Aug. 3. Luke 6.27-36. Loving the Enemy.
Aug. 4. Rom. 13.1-10. Proper Regard for Rulers.
Aug. 5. 1 Sam. 26.17-25. Converting the Enemy.
Aug. 6. Psalm 91.1-16. Safe in God's Care.
Aug. 7. Rom. 8.31-39. God for Us.

VII. Aug. 8. 2 Sam. 6.1-11. The Cultivation of Reverence.
Aug. 9. 2 Sam. 6.12-19. David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.
Aug. 10. Dt. 6.1-9. Piety in the Home.
Aug. 11. 1 Chron. 15.1-3, 11-15. Religious Decorum.
Aug. 12. Jer. 3.11-18. God Enthroned among the Nations.
Aug. 13. Psalm 24.1-10. Jehovah Entering his Sanctuary.
Aug. 14. Psalm 84.1-10. Worship in God's House.

VIII. Aug. 15. 1 Chron. 17.1-12. God's Promise to David.
Aug. 16. 1 Chron. 17.19-27. Thanking God for his Promise.
Aug. 17. Psalm 89.19-37. God's Faithfulness.
Aug. 18. Gen. 22.9-19. God's Larger Plan.
Aug. 19. 1 Peter 2.1-10. A Spiritual House.
Aug. 20. 1 Cor. 3.1-17. Christ the Foundation.
Aug. 21. Heb. 1.1-14. Christ's Throne Eternal.

IX. Aug. 22. 2 Sam. 12.1-10, 13. Nathan Leads David to Repentance.
Aug. 23. Jer. 18.5-12. The Fruit of the Heart.
Aug. 24. Isa. 55.6-13. Penitence and Pardon.
Aug. 25. Luke 18.1-14. Humility and Forgiveness.
Aug. 26. Psalm 32.1-11. The Blessedness of Being Forgiven.
Aug. 27. Isa. 12.1-6. The Joy of Salvation.
Aug. 28. Psalm 103.8-14. God's Lovingkindness.

X. Aug. 29. 1 Kings 3.4-15. Solomon's Wise Choice.
Aug. 30. 1 Chron. 28.1-10. David's Charge to Solomon.
Aug. 31. 1 Chron. 29.10-19. Joy and Thanksgiving.
Sept. 1. Eccl. 9.13-18. Wisdom a Defense.
Sept. 2. Mt. 6.25-34. Life's Priorities.
Sept. 3. Luke 11.5-13. God's Good Gifts for the Asking.
Sept. 4. Prov. 8.12-19. Why Seek Wisdom?

XI. Sept. 5. 1 Kings 5.1-12. Preparation for Building the Temple.
Sept. 6. 1 Kings 6.1-10. The Building of the Temple.
Sept. 7. 1 Kings 6.14-22. The Temple Completed.
Sept. 8. 1 Kings 6.23-36. The Temple Adorned.
Sept. 9. 1 Kings 8.1-11, 62, 63. Solomon Dedicates the Temple.
Sept. 10. 1 Cor. 3.10-17. The Temple of God.
Sept. 11. Psalm 122.1-9. Love for God's House.

XII. Sept. 12. 1 Kings 12.12-20. The Kingdom Divided.
Sept. 13. 2 Chron. 13.5-11. The Sin of Apostasy.
Sept. 14. Prov. 15.22, 23. Pride versus Humility.
Sept. 15. 1 Cor. 3.1-9. Co-operation versus Division.
Sept. 16. Ezek. 37.21-28. A Prophecy of Reunion.
Sept. 17. 1 Cor. 12.25-31. United in Christ.
Sept. 18. Prov. 1.20-26. Seeking Counsel of God.

XIII. Sept. 19. 1 Sam. 10.17-25. Saul Chosen King.
Sept. 20. 1 Sam. 12.1-5. Samuel's Farewell.
Sept. 21. 1 Sam. 16.4-13. Samuel Anoints David.
Sept. 22. 2 Sam. 6.12-19. David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.
Sept. 23. 1 Chron. 17.1-12. God's Promise to David.
Sept. 24. 1 Kings 3.4-15. Solomon's Wise Choice.
Sept. 25. Psalm 105.1-8. Thanksgiving for God's Care.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Sept. 26. 1 Kings 18.36-46. Elijah on Mount Carmel.
Sept. 27. Judges 7.19-25. Gideon's Victory.
Sept. 28. Judges 15.14-20. Samson's Victory.
Sept. 29. Daniel 8.8-18. Standing for God and the Right.
Sept. 30. Ruth 1.8-18. Ruth's Wise Choice.
Oct. 1. 1 Thess. 5.15-28. Avoiding Evil.
Oct. 2. Psalm 115.1-18. God Our Helper.

II. Oct. 3. 1 Kings 19.1-8. Jezebel's Threat.
Oct. 4. 1 Kings 19.9-19. Elijah's Flight and Return.
Oct. 5. Joshua 1.1-9. Jehovah's Charge to Joshua.
Oct. 6. Genesis 21.14-21. Hagar Encouraged.
Oct. 7. Mt. 11.1-10. John the Baptist Encouraged.
Oct. 8. Psalm 27.1-14. Fearless Trust in Jehovah.
Oct. 9. Psalm 57.1-11. A Prayer for Deliverance.

III. Oct. 10. 1 Kings 21.1-4. Ahab Covets Naboth's Vineyard.
Oct. 11. 1 Kings 21.5-16. Jezebel's Wicked Plan.
Oct. 12. 1 Kings 21.17-26. Elijah Denounces Ahab.
Oct. 13. Rom. 7.7-25. The Sin of Covetousness.
Oct. 14. Gen. 4.3-15. Sin Cannot Be Hid.

	Oct.	15.	Gal. 6.1-10. Sowing and Reaping.
	Oct.	16.	Psalm 94.17-23. Jehovah the Just Judge.
IV.	Oct.	17.	Isaiah 6.1-8. The Call of Isaiah.
	Oct.	18.	Gen. 12.1-9. The Call of Abram.
	Oct.	19.	Exod. 3.1-12. The Call of Moses.
	Oct.	20.	1 Sam. 3.1-11. The Call of Samuel.
	Oct.	21.	Mt. 4.18-25. The Call of Peter.
	Oct.	22.	Acts 9.1-9. The Call of Saul.
	Oct.	23.	Psalm 40.1-10. Delighting in the Way.
V.	Oct.	24.	Amos 2.4-12. The Sin of Israel.
	Oct.	25.	Amos 3.1-15. Judgment on Israel.
	Oct.	26.	Lev. 10.8-11. Dangers of Intemperance.
	Oct.	27.	Isaiah 28.1-8. Degraded by Intemperance.
	Oct.	28.	1 Cor. 11.17-34. Intemperance in the Church.
	Oct.	29.	Rom. 13.1-7. Good Citizens.
	Oct.	30.	Psalm 15. Dwellers of Zion.
VI.	Oct.	31.	Amos 5.10-15. Amos Pleads for Justice.
	Nov.	1.	Amos 6.1-6. At Ease in Sin.
	Nov.	2.	Luke 4.14-21. Social Justice Proclaimed.
	Nov.	3.	Joel 2.12-17. A Call to Repentance.
	Nov.	4.	Mt. 3.7-12. Fruits Meet for Repentance.
	Nov.	5.	Phil. 2.1-11. Love Exemplified.
	Nov.	6.	Prov. 21.1-7. In the King's Hand.
VII.	Nov.	7.	Hosea 6.1-6. The Goodness of Jehovah.
	Nov.	8.	Hosea 4.1-9. Hosea's Warning.
	Nov.	9.	Hosea 11.1-12. Israel's Ingratitude.
	Nov.	10.	Hosea 14.1-9. Hosea's Prayer.
	Nov.	11.	James 1.19-27. The Way to Live.
	Nov.	12.	1 John 2.1-8. The Constancy of God's Love.
	Nov.	13.	Psalm 36.5-10. The Loving-kindness of Jehovah.
VIII.	Nov.	14.	Micah 2.1-5. Woe to the Oppressor.
	Nov.	15.	Micah 3.1-12. False Rulers and Prophets.
	Nov.	16.	Micah 6.1-8. Injustice Rebuked.
	Nov.	17.	Micah 7.1-6. Moral Corruption of Israel.
	Nov.	18.	Dt. 15.12-18. The Year of Jubilee.
	Nov.	19.	Luke 4.16-21. The Mission of the Master.
	Nov.	20.	James 1.19-27. The Acceptable Life.
IX.	Nov.	21.	Isa. 1.1-9. The Chosen People in Sin.
	Nov.	22.	Isa. 1.10-20. Acceptable Worship.
	Nov.	23.	Isa. 1.21-31. Corrupt Zion Redeemed.
	Nov.	24.	Psalm 84. Delight in Worship.
	Nov.	25.	Zech. 12.10-14. Grace for Worship.
	Nov.	26.	Neh. 8.1-8. Reverence in Worship.
	Nov.	27.	John 4.21-24. True Worshippers.
X.	Nov.	28.	Isa. 3.1-15. Judah Condemned.
	Nov.	29.	Isa. 4.2-6. A Remnant Saved.
	Nov.	30.	Isa. 5.1-12. Lessons from the Vineyard.
	Dec.	1.	Phil. 3.1-11. Formal Righteousness Unavailing.
	Dec.	2.	Mat. 5.33-48. The Standard of Living.
	Dec.	3.	Rom. 8.1-11. Freedom through Christ.
	Dec.	4.	Isa. 55.6-13. Mercy to All.
XI.	Dec.	5.	Isa. 7.1-9. Isaiah and Ahaz.
	Dec.	6.	Isa. 31.1-9. Help Against Assyria Promised.
	Dec.	7.	Isa. 37.21-29. Isaiah and Hezekiah.
	Dec.	8.	Psalm 46. Jehovah the Strength of his People.
	Dec.	9.	Psalm 47. Rejoicing in Victory.
	Dec.	10.	Rom. 8.31-39. The Conquering One.
	Dec.	11.	Psalm 21.1-7. Strong in Jehovah's Strength.
XII.	Dec.	12.	1 Kings 18.30-39. Elijah on Mount Carmel.
	Dec.	13.	Amos 5.1-15. Amos Pleads for Justice.
	Dec.	14.	Hosea 11.1-9. Hosea Proclaims God's Love.
	Dec.	15.	Micah 6.1-13. Micah Champions the Oppressed.
	Dec.	16.	Isa. 6.1-8. Isaiah's Call.
	Dec.	17.	Isa. 1.10-20. Isaiah Preaches Repentance.
	Dec.	18.	Psalm 67. The World for Christ.
XIII.	Dec.	19.	Isa. 11.1-10. The Prince of Peace.
	Dec.	20.	Mt. 1.18-25. The Name "Jesus."
	Dec.	21.	Luke 1.1-7. The Birth of Jesus.
	Dec.	22.	Luke 2.8-20. The Heavenly Chorus.
	Dec.	23.	Mt. 2.1-12. The Visit of the Wise Men.
	Dec.	24.	Luke 1.68-79. The Song of Zacharias.
	Dec.	25.	Isa. 9.1-7. The Glorious Rule of the Prince.

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1927

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Is the Church School Making Good? In Chester, England, I came across an interesting old church to which this warning notice was attached: "Five pounds penalty—Anybody found throwing stones at this church." Like those troublesome boys in that historic city are the people who take delight in throwing stones, metaphorically speaking, at the Church schools of our land.

That Church schools are far from perfect the teachers will be the readiest to admit. There is little to make us complacent; there is much to make us apprehensive. Criticisms which sharply challenge the schools but are constructive, we gladly welcome.

Not long ago a school superintendent in Missouri tested the biblical knowledge of two thousand high school pupils. Forty-five per cent thought that Galilee was a river; nearly as many thought that Paul was a book in the Bible and Pilate the author of a biblical book. While a knowledge of biblical facts is only a part, and a lesser part, of what the Church school seeks to impart—the primary purpose of religious instruction being to create Christian character and promote Christian service—such gross ignorance of the Bible should not, of course, be possible anywhere. Those high school students may not be receiving any religious instruction; they may be a part of the twenty-seven million children and young people under twenty-five years of age in our land who do not attend any Church school. Perhaps, too, they would be found equally ignorant in a test of their knowledge of English literature, American history, current events, or some other realm of knowledge of which they should be fairly conversant. Abysmal ignorance can be found in unexpected places. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman avers that if a vote were taken throughout the world on the question as to whether the earth is round or flat, "the flats would have it."

To the question, "Is anything wrong with the Church school?" a noted English worker replied: "Since the time of Raikes (the founder of Sunday schools) there has always been something wrong with the Sunday schools, as there has also been something wrong with the churches, simply because in each instance the work is carried on by human and therefore imperfect instruments."

There never was a time when Christian teachers were better prepared, or were more zealous, able, and earnest than they are now, and it is upon its teachers that the success of the Church schools depends. The editor of the London Spectator thinks that the epoch just ahead of us "*seems* destined to be a godless and soulless age. Yet it is almost certainly going to be the greatest epoch of spiritual resurrection and spiritual progress that the world has ever seen." Let us believe this, and let us have our share in helping to bring to pass that glad consummation.

In the opening chapters of Genesis we are repeatedly told that God looked upon his work of creation and saw that it was good. May not teachers who are engaged in the work of creating righteous characters look upon their work and declare it good? From week to week we cannot discern the results of our teaching, but we shall do well to realize that it is all cumulative, and to encourage our hearts with

the thought of the greatness of our calling. We are members of a glorious company; we have our place in the great historic succession of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—to quote the apostolic list. "No man cometh to his place by accident," said Milton: let us believe his statement true as regards our opportunity for declaring the Word of God and the privilege of life investment in the highest things known to humanity. If we think highly of our work we shall give to it the best of which we are capable. We shall not bring to our service that which costs us little or nothing.

A Crusade in Which Church School Teachers Should Enlist. On a recent visit our Ambassador to the Court of St. James commented humorously upon the English habit of "grousing." It seems that "grousing" differs from criticizing in that it is a habit, a set of the soul. It is really quite a national habit, Mr. Houghton thinks; the average Englishman takes actual pleasure in painting the dark side of things. Likening that habit to the American habit of chewing gum, Mr. Houghton says: "It exercises the same muscles, is just about the same strain on the intellect, and it affords a certain amount of comfort."

The habit is an easy one to acquire. There are numerous "grousers" in our land who do not realize their set of soul. Let us make sure that we do not fall into the habit concerning our over-discussed "problem of youth." There always has been a youth problem and there always will be. Shall we not accept the fact, and start a crusade to discourage the making of the errors of young people *en masse* a topic of conversation and a theme for newspaper and magazine articles, essays and books?

Here is an excellent bit of advice from an editorial in a recent religious paper: "When a man draws near the age of fifty, he ought, conscientiously and courageously, to correct his judgments of the deeds and spirit of young people about a dozen times a day, and especially if his relation to them is not very intimate and revealing. And in seeking to make such corrrection he ought to start out on the assumption that the younger generation is likely to be better rather than worse than the older one was when it was at the same period. But whether better or worse, youth must make its own adventure in life, and it never will accept too much direction or control from those of riper years. And however much age may be able to give such direction and control, it can only be helpful as it is wise and understanding."

What is it that "grousers" criticize in the young people who attend Church schools? (We are not speaking here of the youths who commit approximately seventy-five per cent of the crimes in our land, for they do not come from Church schools.) They are called Sabbath-breakers, giddy, irresponsible, pleasure-seeking, irreverent, religiously indifferent. Could not the same accusations have been made with equal truth of our generation in our youth? And is our generation guiltless of these indictments now?

Do young people take automobile trips on Sunday instead of attending church and school? Who sets the example, if not their elders? Do young girls prefer to sleep on Sunday morning in order to recuperate from late Saturday evening affairs? Do their mothers never claim Sunday for rest from the card parties and social whirl of the week? Do high school and college students find Sundays useful for catching up in their studies? Do their parents never use the day for planning their work, making out their income tax, attending to various miscellaneous jobs?

Young people are giddy and pleasure-loving. Are not their parents? Bishop Edwin Hughes says that he is not so much alarmed about "the sixteen-year-old flappers" as he is about "the flapper of forty-five to sixty." A famous teacher is wont to say, "The more I see of the average parent, the more highly I think of the average boy."

Shall we term our youth irreverent because they are impatient of convention and outworn tradition? All young people today are by no means religious nor even religiously inclined. They never have been in any generation, and they never will be. But as great numbers as ever are today loyally accepting the principles of Christ, and more eager than were the youth of former days to make them operative in service for others. In the past, youth talked more about religion, but it may well be doubted whether youth thought as much about religion as a life to be lived.

"Youth is bold as the knights of old were bold
To salvage the best that the centuries hold."

The right-minded young people today want to make this a better world, a warless world; they want to abolish the evils of the present social order, to reconstruct society on the basis of justice and good will; they dream of a larger world-

friendship and a new internationalism, for they believe that Christianity should be effective in all life's relationships.

Can we not agree with a happy worker among young people who speaks of "this splendid, bewildering, adventurous, hopeful, new generation"? Let us rejoice in the independence and enthusiasm, abounding energy and earnestness, high idealism and intolerance of cant and hypocrisy, of our youth, and look to them to meet William Carey's challenge: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

The Teacher That Boys Like Best. A large group of boys who attended the International Older Boys' Camp Conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, last summer were given five minutes in which to tell what sort of Church school teacher they liked best. Their answers were printed in The International Journal of Education. Practically all said something to the effect that their teacher must be athletic, a good sport, full of pep, a good mixer, sincere, interested in his pupils, a real pal, and one who lives what he teaches. Further attributes of their ideal teacher which I have culled I give here in the boys' own words, thinking that you who are teachers of boys will find them worth pondering:

"We want one who says, 'Johnnie, wiggle this way,' and not, 'Johnnie, don't wiggle.'" . . . "A fellow with a round face." . . . "He must not be so different as to be conspicuous." . . . "Religious, not pious." . . . "Must keep order without being cross all the time." . . . "One who talks heart to heart with a fellow." . . . "A man who is a boy who has never grown up in his relations with boys." . . "One who can push the boys in the class ahead in leadership." . . . "One who is not grouchy." . . . "One who doesn't give advice." . . . "One who will be a companion and not an old deacon."

In regard to the kind of teaching they want, the boys have this to say:

"We want a teacher who has prepared his lesson and knows what he is teaching." . . . "One who starts his task with a kick and makes it snappy all the way through." . . . "One who does not give too much sport or political talk." . . . "Who is modern in the way that he does not just want us to read the Bible and has a cut-and-dried lesson." . . . "Full of the lesson; full of general background." . . . "Has a good story to tell." . . . "Who can hold the interest of the class and command their attention by furnishing a variety of ways to teach the class." . . . "He knows the lesson, and I also know that I, too, will know it." . . . "Gives the class a chance to participate." . . . "One who gives the stuff straight from the shoulder."

The Teacher That Girls Like Best. A similar question was asked of the Older Girls at their Conference at the same place. They all agreed that their ideal teacher was young in spirit, though not necessarily young in years, was well-educated and had a pleasing personality, was personally interested in each girl, impartial, sincere, sympathetic and understanding. These further qualities, though not so picturesquely stated as by the boys, are equally thought-provoking for teachers of girls:

"One who is an example for the girls in dress, actions and talk." . . . "Well-dressed and neat; refined and attractive." . . . "Has gentle voice and good manners." . . . "Uses good English." . . . "Tactful." . . . "Enthusiastic." . . . "Girls like a teacher who is old enough to understand them, and yet young in spirit, ready to sympathize and enter into class activities with real, sincere enthusiasm." . . . "Is easy to talk with." . . . "You can bring problems of all sorts to her and talk them over frankly, and she'll give you the best advice she knows of." . . . "She does not betray confidences." . . . "She understands girls of the present, not of her day alone." . . . "Girls like a teacher who is interested in their ideas and who does not have the idea that the young people today are going to ruin." . . . "She must be human, not painfully pious or a 'goody-good.'" . . . "Should not be all wrapped up in religious things, but should have some other interests." . . . "She attends regularly and is always on time." . . . "One who can plan good times, as picnics, socials, etc." . . . "One who is not too busy with other things."

Here is what the girls say about the kind of teaching they want:

"One who will give the girls something to do, and does not do all the talking herself." . . . "She must not preach every Sunday; most girls like class discussions." . . . "Able to ask good questions." . . . "Has a thorough knowledge of the Bible and modern-day questions." . . . "Has good explaining ability and wide knowledge of world problems." . . . "One who puts her heart into her work." . . . "One who can put across the gospel truth without sugar-coating it." . . . "One who relates the lesson to our daily life instead of simply giving forth the lesson ideas; one who

leaves room for questions and the clearing up of points." . . . "A teacher must know her material thoroughly, know the biblical and geographical background, but most of all be able to draw out some important truths from the lesson which will help a girl in everyday life: the teacher who does this by illustration, stories, examples from her own experience, scores high."

The Teacher That Young People and Adults Like Best. It would be interesting could we have equally frank statements from members of adult classes as to their preferences and needs. Adult class members vary greatly in age and outlook upon life, however, and therefore in what they wish in their leaders. A class of old men or old ladies does not need the sort of leadership that a class does which consists of young married people or college students who are eager for live topics and helpful discussions. There are classes of business girls, factory workers, middle-aged mothers, mature business men, society women, mixed classes of every age above the teen age, all of whose members need help in holding their conduct true to Christian standards, but for whom the lines of thought and service differ.

The younger groups have been explicit as to the fact that their teachers must be neither too old in spirit nor too young in feeling. How about teachers of adult classes: what age is acceptable there? "Am I Too Old to Teach?" is the title of an article in a recent magazine written by an unnamed college professor. He claims to be in his prime as to appearance, health and vigor, but he wonders if he is not too old because of the mood in which he took up his subject and met his classes this fall. He recalls the rush with which in other days he flung himself upon his work, the mental hospitality with which he welcomed each student-mind, the way in which he used to read over the class lists when they came to him from the dean's office, for he was tremendously interested in his students. "I used to look over my first assembly with unconcealed interest," he writes. "The class was not just a body; it presented as variegated a landscape as a Swiss canton. There were heights in it to be looked at approvingly, and valleys to be eyed alertly but a little tenderly, and plains to be brought up to some degree of differentiation. With them all I expected to establish a relation; and I expected to see them depart from me at the end of the term with a sense of separation. But last June my chief hope, as I departed for the summer, was that I should not meet any one under twenty-five until I returned."

A teacher of any class must be young enough in spirit to be alertly interested in his subject and in his pupils. A teacher of a Bible class must care enough about the individual members of his class to make an effort to draw the backward ones out of the shells in which they persistently take refuge. It is strange, yet true, that many a person who has a fairly good opinion of himself, who may even be egotistical, is nevertheless troubled with an "inferiority complex" when it comes to expressing his opinion in class. An adult who thinks the leader does not care about his opinion is likely to become irregular in attendance, if not to drop out of the class altogether.

We may say with assurance that the majority of adults prefer, as do the younger groups, a teacher who is a leader rather than a lecturer. They want a share in class discussions. Moreover, there is the danger that a leader who delivers a "sermon" inclines his class to stay away from church services on the ground that one sermon a day is sufficient. A Bible class leader should not be a competitor of the preacher.

It is an excellent plan for the leader to talk upon the lesson topic for perhaps fifteen minutes and then devote the remainder of the class period to discussion by the members. He will need to be on his guard about overstepping his time limit. Herbert Spencer tells of a pigeon that was born in a cage and after several years of captivity was given its liberty. To the surprise of its owner, who stood watching it, it was able to fly perfectly. After a little, however, it grew excited and panting; it flew in ever-smaller circles until at last it dashed itself against his breast and fell exhausted to the ground. The bird had not lost its inherited instinct for flight, but it did not possess the secret of folding its wings and alighting safely on the ground. Once started on its flight, it seemed as if it must go on for ever. Adult students prefer a leader who knows when and how to stop.

Too often adult classes are judged by their enrolment and attendance; if their average attendance is good it is rated a success. It may be only selfishly prosperous, without school loyalty, without definite activities for the church and the community. In adult classes the Bible should be studied for its bearing upon modern problems and tasks, and emphasis should be placed upon the practical services which the class individually and collectively can render. When Rubinstein

was in America he went to church with a friend where he "heard a little preacher preach a little sermon on a sentimental theme." The following Sunday evening the friend invited the musician to attend service again with him. "I will," said Rubinstein, "but on one condition; you must take me to hear a man who will tempt me to do the impossible."

A subtle temptation comes to some adult class leaders to woo popularity. To them Dean Charles Reynolds Brown's words aptly apply, though written to preachers:

"Here am I, not to put in thirty minutes with some sort of pious talk because it is the custom. Here am I, not to create a wonderful impression by making what is called 'one of my best efforts.' Here am I, not merely to give an audience a pleasant half hour. Here am I, to allow the best I have in mind and soul, in brotherly sympathy and in spiritual effectiveness, to find expression and lodge something of permanent worth in the lives of these people."

Studies in the Christian Life. Some one has said that our churches are made up of people who would be equally shocked to see Christianity doubted or Christianity put into practice. A man who believes the Bible "from cover to cover" thinks he is a good Christian. He may be, says Stanley Jones, but not just because of his belief. "Does he experience it? Does he live it?" Mr. Jones questions. To Dr. Jowett all his life, as he himself said, religion was "a practical thing, not a theological theory; a matter of innermost fact; not of its intellectual expression." His biographer finds herein Dr. Jowett's life-long unconcern about theology. He kept abreast of all the light which modern scholarship has thrown upon the Bible, but he said nothing about it, and his only concern was that he and all who came within the influence of his preaching should live the Christian life.

An enthusiastic parishioner of a popular preacher grasped his hand at the close of a service, and as she volubly thanked him for his "wonderful effort" which was "so helpful" she was heard to remark, "Isn't it glorious to think that the All in All is in the All in All?" However precious a gem of thought that may have seemed to her, we are safe in saying that it had no power to make religion vital in her everyday living.

Of a parson of long ago one of his parishioners said: "Me liketh John Davenport when he preacheth doctrine. Me liketh not John Davenport when he preacheth practice." We shall find during our First Quarter's studies that our pupils, especially the young men and women, are not like the man just quoted. They are eager for just such a series of lessons as we have for the first three months.

"What in your conception is Christianity—a set of doctrines or a way of life? What is the church doing to meet the social and political questions of the time?" These questions were asked of a college student and this was his answer:

"Why do preachers at home always harp on the necessity of belief in certain doctrines? Why do they not tell us something about Christianity as a life? We want to know how to live. We are deeply interested in religion, but not in dogma. There is little in the average church that leads the young man or woman to think that the church is interested in the social and political conditions of the day. It has little interest in any kind of religion save individual religion. It has no social religion. Then, too, we cannot see that church members carry their religion over into their business and into their daily contacts. We hear them swear, see them gamble, and we hear of their inhuman treatment of employees. There is frequently little in the church to challenge a young man or woman who has grown to see that Christianity is bigger and better than the church members would lead one to believe it is."

The series of lessons in the First Quarter of this year has been selected that our pupils "may discover, through a study of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles, the Christian way of living in our day." In lessons taken consecutively from any book in the Bible there is danger of emphasizing too much the history and too little the applying of the lesson truth to our own day. Here in this Quarter's lessons we can do no other than emphasize the Christian way of living for us. Here we study what it means to be a Christian, what the duties and privileges of a Christian are. The themes are all vital and challenging. Are we Christians? What is the standard of Christian living? How do we study the Bible? What is prayer, and what place has it in the life of a Christian? How are we spending our money? Are we Christians in the home? Have we at heart the interests of our church, community, nation, the world? Do Christian principles govern our lives in all their relationships? What definite Christian services are we rendering?

The Influence of Christ upon the Life of Peter. Peter is the most prominent of all the twelve disciples, and for the majority of people he is the most interesting of them all. For three months we study his life and letters. An example, as Gladstone said, is worth a thousand arguments, and though we live in a very different world from that in which Peter lived, we are not so very different from Peter himself, and we shall find the study of his example most profitable. "Biography, the most interesting, perhaps, of all species of composition," Sir Walter Scott wrote, "loses all its interest for me when the shades and lights of the principal characters are not accurately and faithfully detailed. I can no more sympathize with a mere eulogist than I can with a ranting hero upon the stage." The Evangelists do not eulogize Peter; they faithfully show us all his faults. Impulsive, unreliable, fickle, we find him in their records, but in The Acts he has become the rock, the steadfast, loyal follower and fearless champion of his Lord and Master.

"Standing up and falling down, long on promises and short on performance, blundering indelicately into situations where he does not belong, essentially sound of heart and purpose, more the victim of uncoördinated good impulses than of any particularly bad impulse—he is such a mixture as that of which most of us feel ourselves to be made. We therefore like to look at him, to have him interpreted to us, to get on terms of better acquaintance with him, for all the while we are seeing ourselves as in a mirror.

"Yet this is not a full explanation of our interest in Peter. There are many personalities like his which have no such interest for us. What makes Peter interesting is the contact of Jesus with him. Here we have before our eyes a sort of clinical demonstration, in the realm of character, of what the personal friendship of Jesus can do for us all. The personal, friendly presence of Jesus invests the moving pictures of successive scenes with warmth and romance, and we could wish to be able to trace each in his own experience a similar growth of the Spirit."

We have six lessons from the Gospels in which we see Peter become a disciple of Jesus, receive a lesson in trust, attain to the wonderful insight of his great confession, behold the Transfiguration of Christ, deny his Lord and repent bitterly his fall, and receive Christ's last commission. Five lessons follow from the first twelve chapters of The Acts, chapters which might well be called The Acts of Peter, and one lesson from the Second Epistle of Peter, where we have the record of what Christ, after his invisible presence was withdrawn, continued to do in and through Peter.

For Peter could have said with Browning:

> "That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows."

Early Kings and Prophets of Israel from Samuel to Isaiah. This is the second year of our six year cycle of lessons. Last year we had three months with Genesis, followed by six months with the early leaders of Israel, from Moses to Samuel, covering the books of the Old Testament to the eighth chapter of First Samuel. This year we take up our Old Testament studies where we left them last year, and have a six months' course upon the early kings and prophets of Israel, from Samuel to Isaiah.

In these lessons the aim, as our Lesson Committee has stated it, is to promote personal and national righteousness by a study of Israel's early kings and prophets. In the Third Quarter we cover the period of the United Monarchy. Saul, the unstable, the first king, fails to weld the tribes into a nation, and David, the versatile, comes to the throne and becomes the greatest king Israel ever knew. Solomon, the oppressor, fails to fulfil the promise of his young manhood, and under his son and successor the United Kingdom comes to an end. The prophets of this period are Samuel and Nathan. In the Fourth Quarter we cover the life of the prophet Elijah and have eight lessons from the books of the prophets of the eighth century B.C., Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah.

During the first four months of this six months' course the stories about Samuel, David, Solomon and Elijah will delight Intermediate scholars. Usually the whole story should be covered, not merely the verses printed. These are powerfully dramatic stories, told with such remarkable vividness and skill that they will make their own impression upon Intermediates. For Seniors and Adults to spend the class hour upon the familiar details of these stories would be deadly. The mere mention of the story, at most a brief sketching of its high lights, will be sufficient

in these classes. Yet adults have not outgrown the lesson truths of these ancient stories. There they see how God was educating men in the knowledge of his truth and his ways.

Excellent books for teachers of Intermediates are Edersheim's History of Israel and Judah, volumes IV and V; F. B. Meyer's books upon Samuel the Prophet and David the King in the Old Testament Heroes Series; David, King of Israel, by Wm. M. Taylor; and the volumes upon Samuel and Saul, David and Solomon and Elijah in The Men of the Bible Series.

The last half of the Fourth Quarter has texts from the prophets which will yield their full secret only to those who study them carefully and thoughtfully.

What were the prophets? What was their mission? Make sure that your pupils can answer these questions correctly. When Saul could not find his father's asses he took his servant's advice and sought out the prophet Samuel. Like most people of that time, Saul thought of a seer as a sort of fortune teller, one who could tell where the lost animals were, who would, like the Greek augurs of later times, foretell the results of battles, and predict coming events. Such professional "seers" there were in Israel, but they were not the true prophets. This false conception of a prophet's power still persists, and there are multitudes in our own day and land to whom a prophet is one who predicted and the prophetical books are books which foretell future events. If any of your pupils have such an erroneous and limited an idea of the prophet and his mission, our course this year will enlighten them.

The prophets were in the fullest sense the products of the age in which they lived, imbued with its thoughts and cognizant of its problems. We cannot grasp the meaning of their books unless we know something about the times in which they lived, the character of kings and peoples, the national enemies and impending dangers—the situation, in a word, which called forth their utterances.

The prophets were keen observers and clear-visioned statesmen. They were the interpreters of history. They knew what was happening in their world and interpreted God's purposes in those happenings. They were able to foretell national events because they had a clear insight into the principles which control the destiny of nations.

They were primarily religious teachers who meditated upon the evils of their day and endeavored to induce the people to reform. In their writings we get more vivid pictures of the moral and social conditions of their times than we do in the historical books. They were spiritual discoverers, who saw God and knew God's will. "They were for men 'God's experts'; applying eternal truths to the passing phases and conditions of life. They lived for God and therefore they toiled and wrought for men." Keenly alive to what we today term the social questions, imbued with a passion for the rights of men, they held up a mirror, as it were, before the faces of kings and priests and people for them to see therein their true features—their greed, oppression, immorality, entire forgetfulness of God.

By the time of "the writing prophets" conditions of life resembled somewhat those of modern times. National and international problems had arisen similar to those in the world today. The truths they taught are timeless. "The remarkable thing about these prophets from Amos down through the list is that their figures and their arguments are most applicable to our present day. To have struck down so deep and to have reached so high that men can never outgrow the lesson is the sign of true greatness and living power."

There are many excellent books upon the prophets. Among them are: The Book of the Twelve Prophets, by George Adam Smith; The Minor Prophets, F. W. Farrar; Prophetic Ideas and Ideals, W. G. Jordan; Old Testament Prophecy, A. B. Davidson; The Progress of Old Testament Prophecy, W. J. Farley; The Teaching of the Prophets, Charles Arthur Hardly; A Cry for Justice (Amos), John Edgar McFadyen; Isaiah, his Life and Times, S. R. Driver.

THE BOOKS IN THE COURSE

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

Their Title. While the greater part of the Books of Samuel is devoted to Saul and David, they are called by the name of Samuel doubtless because the history of Samuel occupies the principal part of the early chapters, and he is a prominent character later, having anointed both Saul and David, his successors as leaders of the people.

Their Date. Those who believe the books to be a compilation assign 700 B. C. as about the date in which they were edited as we now have them.

Their Contents.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to the new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,

are Tennyson's words which aptly befit the message of the Books of Samuel. They tell of the change in government and of the establishment of the monarchy. Beginning during the judgeship of Eli, they narrate the history of God's dealings with the Israelites under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David, ending with the close of David's life, a period of about one hundred years. At the beginning Israel is the collection of scattered tribes of which we read in the Book of Judges; at the close Israel is an important nation.

As Literature. When John Fiske was a lad his pastor asked him one day what he was going to do when he became a man. "I am going to grow up and write a book like Samuel's," said the future historian. The boy's literary sense had been awakened by the strong, picturesque narratives of the Books of Samuel, and to them he doubtless owed much of his ability to portray American history so vividly.

In these books the stories of Eli and Samuel, of Saul and David and Absalom, are told with so much detail that they read rather like a series of biographies than like history, and they rank among the literary masterpieces of the world. Viscount Bryce says of them: "They have a vivid quality that modern pens cannot produce. When a man of today tries to reproduce the fresh and direct simplicity of these early narratives, he is almost inevitably drawn into a conscious old-fashionedness or preciosity. He is not natural, but archaic."

The early chapters were the delight of Luther's heart; with unwonted tenderness he would read and reread them, for to turn from his own strenuous and turbulent activities to the child Samuel "ministering before Jehovah" was a restful change. The tragic life of Saul—chosen, found wanting, rejected, maddened, eclipsed—is told with fascination and power. And as for the life of David, "it would be difficult to overpraise the literary and historical genius of the writer who traces the checkered course of David's reign." The writer rarely expresses a judgment, but he shows great literary skill in the way he gives us an insight into the springs of character. Gems of purest ray are David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan, and Nathan's parable of "Thou art the Man."

Lessons for Today. "As I watch the movement of this story, gathering around the three central figures Samuel, Saul and David, the supreme revelation is not of these men, but of Jehovah reigning by the adaptation of his method to the requirements of the hour, and so through disobedience or obedience, through success or failure, through men loyal or rebellious, moving quietly, steadily, and surely on. This book inspires a great song, which can best be uttered in the words of the Psalmist, 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice!'"

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

Its Title. First and Second Kings are thus called because they cover that part of Israel's history in which the Kings reigned. They mention all the Kings of Israel save Saul, the first King.

Its Date. It is believed that First Kings was written in Judah before the Exile, perhaps about 600 B. C.

Its Contents. The close connection of the four Books of Samuel and Kings is shown by the title given them in the Septuagint Version of "The First, Second, Third and Fourth Books of the Kingdom." The First Book of Kings continues the history where the Second Book of Samuel leaves it. The title of the Syriac Version reads: "Here follows the Book of the Kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in it is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their time."

The First Book of Kings begins with David in his feeble old age, records the splendor of Solomon's reign, and continues with the history of the two kingdoms which arose at his death until Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah and Ahaziah's reign over Israel. Its chief heroes are King Solomon and the prophet Elijah.

As Literature. In the first half of the book the scenes connected with David's assuring the throne to Solomon and the visit to Solomon of the Queen of Sheba are told most vividly. The splendid glitter of Solomon's reign is clearly portrayed, but the record does not show us Solomon the man as the Second Book of Samuel discloses David's inner life. The brief, formal summaries of the Kings of Israel and Judah which follow—good kings and bad kings, kings who worshiped Jehovah and kings who thought Jehovah and the Baalim might be worshiped side by side—are monotonously given, but the narratives from the life of Elijah, the stern prophet who appears unexpectedly at critical moments, are graphic and stirring, told with fine dramatic power.

Lessons for Today. The one main lesson which the narrative of the Books of Kings is meant to teach, Canon Farrar points out, is absolute faith and trust in God as an anchor which holds amid the wildest storms of ruin and of apparently final failure. It shows us that duty is the reward of duty, and that there can be no happiness save for those who know that duty and blessedness are one.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

The Prophet. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son: but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycomore-trees; and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel,' "—thus we hear Amos saying in our first lesson from the Book of Amos, the fourth lesson of the Last Quarter. Amos was not a member of a prophetic guild, he was an "inspired farmer" when there flashed upon him the conviction that he must be Jehovah's messenger to his people Israel, that through him the divine warning must be spoken.

How could a mere herdsman and dresser of sycomore-trees have such a remarkable command of language as his writing shows? "To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern Society," Professor Robertson Smith explains. "At the courts of the Caliphs their Emirs, the rude Arabs of the desert, were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory, and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination. Among the Hebrews, as in the Arabian desert, knowledge and oratory were not affairs of professional education, nor dependent for their cultivation on wealth or social status. The sum of book-learning was small; men of all ranks mingled with that oriental freedom which is so foreign to our habits. A shrewd observation, a memory retentive of traditional lore, and the faculty of original reflection took the place of laborious study as the ground of intellectual preëminence."

Amos was a Judean, a native of Tekoa, south of Jerusalem. In the desolate, rugged uplands south of Tekoa, not far from the Dead Sea, he had pastured his flocks. There he had been alone with God. There he had meditated, formed clear judgments, and learned how to become a leader whom God could use. His addresses show the effect of his life among the wilds, for to him life was serious, nature was stern, God was severe.

Amos was a champion of the simple life. He lived simply himself, and he had no use for those who lived in idle luxury. He was intense in all his beliefs and feelings. He hated and despised all evidences of luxury or grandeur; he sympathized with the lonely and the needy; he waxed fiercely indignant over the woes of the down-trodden and oppressed.

How could a herdsman gain so intimate a knowledge as Amos possessed of the Court of Israel and of the character, strength and ambitions of surrounding nations? As a wool-grower he probably made annual trips to the leading markets of Judah and Israel, and occasionally even to the Jewish trading quarters in Damascus. Tekoa was only an hour's distance from the great highway leading to Hebron; six miles from Bethlehem; twelve miles from Jerusalem; twenty-two miles from Bethel, and forty-two from Samaria. In caravans and in market-places Amos must have met men of other nations. He was keenly observant, and wise in the deductions he drew from what he saw and heard. He noted the social injustices, the rottenness of life, the falseness of worship, and learned how powerful were the Assyrians, whose armies were conquering nation after nation—Israel lay in her pathway, hers was the avenging hand by which God would punish the wickedness of his people.

We think of the princes and elders, the wealthy and powerful, in Israel as listening to this herdsman from Tekoa in utter amazement. They were as astonished (Dr. Jowett makes the comparison) as Sir Philip Warrick and many others were astonished when a farmer named Oliver Cromwell came from Huntington and stood amid the refinements of the English Parliament, stood there "in a plain cloth suit, made by an ill country tailor," and spoke to the assembled representatives "with voice sharp and untunable, but with eloquence full of fervor."

It must have required great courage on the part of Amos, a peasant of Judah, to go to the Northern Kingdom and proclaim there the judgment of God upon the people for their sins, a greater courage, it has been said, than for a Jewish prophet to preach against the sins of Nineveh. But Amos never lacked the courage of his convictions; he was utterly fearless in his daring denunciations and threats of impending retribution.

Enmity and opposition were his portions. The leading authorities became alarmed when he declared that "Thus saith the Lord, the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." Here were blasphemy and high treason, thought Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, and of these crimes he accused the prophet to the king, declaring that "The land is not able to bear all his words." Jeroboam evidently left Amaziah to deal with the prophet as he pleased. "Go," the priest ordered Amos, "flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." Amos replied that he had been divinely commissioned to preach unto Israel (6.15): "The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" he said. "He had gone to Israel, not because he wanted to, but because God had sent him; he had spoken for God, not because it pleased him to hurl forth his gloomy warnings, but because he felt the sense of the urgency upon him." Amos fearlessly finished his warning addresses and then returned to Judea, where he evidently wrote down their substance.

Tradition—which may or may not be true—says that he was cruelly beaten and died a short time after going back to Judea.

The Date of the Book of Amos. Amos lived in the eighth century B. C., in the reigns of Uzziah, King of Judah, and Jeroboam II, King of Israel. "Two years before the earthquake" is the way he himself dates the beginning of his prophecy. Uzziah reigned forty-five years in Jerusalem (782-737 B. C.), and somewhere in that reign occurred an earthquake so startling and devastating that the Judeans dated events from it. The book is generally assigned to the middle of the eighth century B.C. It is the earliest written of the prophetical books, and Amos is therefore called "the father of written prophecy." The Book of Amos is, moreover, the oldest book in the Bible; for while part of the Historical Books were written earlier, taking the books of the Bible as they stand, this is the oldest of them all.

The Message of the Book of Amos. To all outward seeming the Northern Kingdom, or Israel, was at peace and exceedingly prosperous in the time of Amos. Jeroboam II, the greatest of the kings of Israel, had a long and brilliant reign. Before his time Israel had lost considerable territory in her wars with the Syrians, but the Syrians were now vanquished by the Assyrians, and Israel had rapidly regained lost territory, for Jeroboam II was successful in his military exploits. Israel was at the height of her prosperity, feared by her enemies and respected by her allies, her foreign trade was greatly expanded, and everywhere were evidences of abundant wealth. Men and women were "at ease in Zion"; clothed in purple and fine linen they reclined in ivory chairs by day and rested on ivory couches at night.

But Amos was not deceived by all this display. He observed the concomitant evils, indolence and vice, robbery and injustice, the most callous indifference to the woes of the poor, the violation of all divine and human laws, the disgraceful feastings and revelings and drunkenness and the general belief that God would overlook all things, that because they were God's chosen people he would protect them from their enemies, that if they observed an elaborate ritual they could sin as they pleased and all would be well. Amos observed in all this the symptoms of decay; he knew that sin brings forth punishment, that unrestrained vice leads to destruction. His first recorded message he begins with the words, "Jehovah will roar from Zion"—like a lion just before he makes his spring. "The lion hath roared; who will not fear?"

"A Cry for Justice," is the title given by Professor J. E. McFadyen to his "Study in Amos," and no single term could better describe the book.

The first thing that strikes the reader is the remarkable fact that the God whom Amos knows is not the God of the Hebrews only, but is a God of world-wide interests and is behind all great movements. Israel was but one of many nations upon whom God's love of justice and kindness and righteousness were binding.

Four great facts stand out in his message to Israel: (1) the iniquity of Israel; (2) the righteousness and wrath of Jehovah; (3) the certainty of judgment; (4) the Assyrians will be God's agents in meting out the punishment.

The Book as Literature. Amos always speaks with directness and power. Jerome spoke disparagingly of his style, saying that he was "rude in speech, but not in knowledge." The style of his writing is always forcible, and even harsh, but it is clear, and there are not wanting rhetorical passages of great beauty. Recall the remarkable passage of 3.3-18 in which the prophet expresses his conception of the world as an arena of law and order, cause and effect. "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? Shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all? Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it? The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

The writing has all the force of a spoken address—pointed, dramatic delivery, the strong, passionate appeal of a living man dealing with living people and vital questions. Its imagery is drawn from the everyday world. In brilliant metaphor and vivid word picture the prophet speaks of sheep and wild animals, of ploughman and sower and reaper, of winds and hurricanes, mildew and blight and locusts and decaying fruit.

Noticeable are his numerous orderly series: in the first two chapters nations are arraigned in order, from the most distant down to the homeland; the sins of Israel and the proofs of God's patience and goodness are listed in two orderly series in the second chapter; there is a series of illustrations in the third chapter; of punishments in the fourth; of evidences of idle luxury in the sixth; of visions in the seventh; of statements as to the unavoidableness of God's judgment in the ninth.

Its Lessons for Today. It is not for his own time only that Amos enjoins his readers to "Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate"; his voice, though addressed to Israel more than twenty-six centuries ago, still thunders on and stirs the hearts of men. We cannot read the book without asking ourselves, Is our nation morally sound? Do we believe that if ours is a favored nation, her unrighteousness will be all the more severely punished? Does our conduct—whether as merchants or landowners or judges or men of wealth and leisure—square with God's demands of justice and equity? Do we not know that the greatest of perils lies, not in poverty, but in prosperity? Do we not know that God disciplines his people, and that discipline unheeded fixes destiny?

"No teacher of the pre-Christian era, it is safe to say, comes so close to the most vital interests of our own twentieth century as this prophet of the eighth century before Christ," is the opinion of Professor Henry Thatcher Fowler. "The attack which he makes upon bribery and the oppression of the poor has been reëchoed again and again in recent years among all the more advanced nations of the world, where the struggle for political equality has passed on to the struggle for honest government and economic justice."

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The Prophet Hosea. The second in order of time of the great prophets of the eighth century who left a written record of their teachings, is Hosea, the Son of Beeri. All that we know about him is what can be inferred from his writings. He was the only one of the prophetical writers who was a native of the Northern Kingdom: this we assume from the fact that all the places he mentions are in the land of Israel and because of his great sympathy with Ephraim, the people of the Northern Kingdom. He spoke in the latter days of Jeroboam II and his immediate successors. From the historical allusions in the book, we learn that his career fell between the years 796 and 735 B. C.

In his book he records his domestic troubles, of which there are two interpretations. He begins his book by saying that Jehovah had told him to "take a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom," and the obvious interpretation is that he is here speaking of his marriage from the point of view of his later knowledge of his wife's unfaithfulness. Others think that the prophet is using a figure of speech to describe Israel, and the words mean, "Go, marry a woman of the apostate Northern Kingdom."

Throughout the book the allusions to his wife, refer, in the obvious interpretation, to his domestic experiences; in the second interpretation, the terms refer to the spiritual condition of the wayward kingdom, and especially to Samaria, "the mother."

The Times. Hosea followed Amos in time. His prophecies in the first three chapters are assigned to the peaceful, prosperous period before the death of Jeroboam II, but the prophecies of chapters 4-14 belong to the confused times that followed, when kings were assassinated in rapid succession, when by their desire for alliance with Assyria or Egypt the rulers were heading the Ship of State towards inevitable doom, when corruption and defiance of law reigned. Read 2 K. 14.23-17.6.

"In Amos's day society was dissolute, but in Hosea's day it was dissolved," writes Dr. A. B. Davidson. "In his day every class seemed flung against another; and the furious passions, whether revolutionary or immoral, of the people consumed all about them. In those circumstances it hardly needed a prophet to see that the end of the State was at hand. And, what was worst of all, no hold could be had of the people, from their superficial fickleness and moral shallowness. Sometimes they seemed resolved to abide by their idolatry, with a resolute insensibility to better things: 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.' Sometimes, again, the feeling of the time relative to Jehovah seemed as if it would come back, and soften their hearts—'Come, let us return unto Jehovah . . . He hath smitten, and he will bind up' (6.1). But their superficiality and changeableness threw even the divine mind into despair (6.4)."

Contents of the Book of Hosea. The Book of Hosea divides naturally into two parts. Part I, including chapters 1-3, and Part II, chapters 4-14.

Part I. "A wife in New York wronged her husband cruelly some years ago, running away with another man. The other day, having long ago been deserted and now an outcast and miserable, she met her husband. She turned away in shame to avoid him. He looked at her with the old look and said in the old tones, 'Mary.' She returned and was saved, finding the love unchanged. His friends at first said he was a fool, although now they are wondering, having seen the great redemption. He knew what Christ-love was. To imitate his love is to love to the end."

This paragraph I find in an editorial upon "Imitating the Love of Christ" in the Christian Work and Evangelist. Is it not the story of Hosea in modern terms, that personal experience of his which illustrated in his mind Imitating the Love of God?

Hosea records his domestic misery, the unfaithfulness of his wife Gomer, his love that led him to buy her release from her slavery, and his efforts to bring about her redemption. If human love can be so deep and lasting, how unfathomable must be the divine love! is the lesson Hosea learns. Between this personal history and God's relation to his people Israel the prophet sees an analogy. Israel is unfaithful to God, yet God still loves his people and would redeem them, even though it must be through the discipline of exile.

Part II. The first verse announces its main theme: "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land." Hosea does not hesitate to lay bare the evils of the time, the trust in an alliance with Assyria or Egypt, the forgetfulness of God, the observing of the forms of worship but mingling idolatry with it, and the social crimes of his day, immorality and violence and intemperance. Though his message is a stern one, denouncing, warning, threatening, yet his words are "more sob than speech," and through it runs a tender note, as he pleads for return to God, and tells of the forgiving love of God that will not let his people go.

The Message of Hosea. The general thought of Hosea's message Dr. Harper well sums up in these few propositions: Israel is wicked through and through, and her condition morally is that of rottenness. Israel is politically doomed, the last stages of decay having now been reached. Jehovah is Israel's father, with all a father's love and interest; he is Israel's husband, with all a husband's love and

devotion. Israel fails to comprehend Jehovah, has a totally wrong conception of him, in short, Israel does not know Jehovah. Israel deceives herself in her acts of repentance, but there is a repentance which consists in the turning back to Jehovah. Israel's present attitude toward Jehovah's love means, in the end, her total destruction.

The central idea of Hosea's teaching is the love of God. "He is the first of the prophets to rise to the sublime height of calling the affection with which Jehovah regards his people by the name of love."

Hosea was a strong, tender-hearted, emotional, deeply religious man. Dr. George Adam Smith says of him: "Versatility distinguishes him above other prophets. The most spiritual of them all, he is at the same time the most political. We owe him an analysis of repentance to which the New Testament has little to add; but he has also left us a criticism of society and of politics in Israel, unrivaled except by Isaiah. We owe him an intellectual conception of God which for the first time in Israel exploded idolatry; yet he is also the first to define Israel's position in the politics of Western Asia. With the courage of conscience Amos had said to the people: You are bad, therefore you shall perish. But Hosea's is the insight to follow the processes by which sin brings forth death."

Amos and Hosea Compared. Hosea pictures the wickedness of the times more vividly than does Amos, and enters more into detail concerning the political situation and the immediacy of doom. Amos was the prophet of morality, Hosea the prophet of religion; Amos the prophet of the righteous God, Hosea the prophet of the love of God: Amos was the stern denouncer, the first "doomster," Hosea was the passionate pleader, the first evangelist. There is nothing of the mystic in Amos; there is much in Hosea, who finds something typical in all experiences.

"If Amos is the St. James of the Old Testament, Hosea is the St. John," says Professor McFadyen.

The Book as Literature. The First Part of the Book is, on the whole, a continuous narrative: the Second Part consists of a series of addresses and reflections in which upbraidings and appeals are commingled. The style of the two parts is as different as their manner and method. The language of the First Part is in the main logical. The Second Part is noticeably disconnected and abrupt, full of elliptic and ejaculatory phrases, with swift transitions of thought. The last chapter reminds one of the calm that follows a tempest, with its quiet, beautiful words of exhortation and promised blessings.

Its Lessons for Today. A later writer adds a word of counsel for us at the close of the Book: "Let him who would be wise and prudent know and understand the words of Hosea: through them he may learn that the ways of Jehovah are right and that they determine the fate of all: the just walk in them without stumbling, but the evil-doers fall."

The most memorable verse of the book is 6.6, the one twice quoted by Christ: "For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Hosea taught the all-comprehending, never-ceasing, seeking and saving love of God. Though Hosea hoped for Israel beyond measure, he saw God truly, Dr. Lyman Abbott explains: "The people of the Northern Kingdom, to whom Hosea prophesied, never did return to Jehovah; they abandoned their religion when they went into captivity, and in losing their religion lost their nationality and have for ever disappeared from the world's history. But the love of God which Hosea experienced is eternal, and the power of that love and the joy of that love in the return of the repentant are eternal, and in this love, rejoicing to rescue from sin whoever will accept rescue, lies the secret of all restoration to life from apostasy, national or individual."

THE BOOK OF MICAH

The Prophet Micah. Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, a peasant living in Moresheth, an obscure hamlet on the western foothills bordering the Philistine plain, perhaps twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. Because his father's name is not mentioned, it is believed that, unlike Isaiah, he came from an unimportant family, but from a deeply religious family, for his name means "Who is like unto Jehovah?" He was a man of the people, as we say, a man of deep feeling, ardent patriotism, and flaming zeal.

The Date of the Book. The introduction calls the book "The Word of Jehovah that came to Micah the Morashtite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem." These kings reigned from 737 to 697 B. C., Jeremiah (26.18, 19) says that Micah's preaching led to a reformation under Hezekiah. The sixth verse of the first chapter indicates that when his early sermons were delivered, the fall of Samaria, which took place in 722 B. C., was imminent. The first three chapters are therefore dated about that time. Chapters four and five are visions of the future after the exile, and are assigned to the end of the century. The last chapters are believed to date much later.

To Whom the Prophet Spoke. Micah was called of God to reveal his will: "I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment and of might, to declare unto Jacob (Judah) his transgression, and to Israel (Northern Kingdom) his sin," 3.8. While his prophecies are addressed to both kingdoms, they all refer more particularly to Judah, or Jerusalem, where power was centralized. His words should be studied with those of Isaiah, for as Calvin remarks, "It pleased God that his testimony should be borne by the mouth of two."

His Message. Social wrongs were rampant in Micah's time. His early utterances announce Jehovah's certain judgment upon Samaria and Judah for misuse of power and oppression of the poor. The great calamity which he foresaw as a judgment upon these sins points to the Assyrian conquest. Unlike his contemporary, Isaiah, Micah does not concern himself with the political follies of the rulers, but in the severest terms he arraigns those in authority for their sins of selfishness and greed; the rich were growing richer by their oppression of the poor, the wealthy land-owners were driving off the smaller holders; the judges and officials, the false prophets and the priests, were unjust and inhuman. Micah had grasped the great thought of the justice and mercy of God, and it is injustice and cruelty that he denounces so vigorously, while in the later chapters he declares God's gracious purpose and loving care for his people.

Contents of the Book. The book gives a summary of the prophet's teachings. Short utterances seemingly spoken at various times are put together, and this accounts for the abrupt transition from one thought to another and for the occasional obscurity of meaning.

Chapter one is a prophecy of judgment for sin. Chapters two and three give the reason for the judgment, in the oppression of the poor, and other sins. Chapters four and five are prophecies of blessings. Chapters six and seven charge the nation with corruption, then point to God as the source of light and salvation, and close with a promise of the renewal of God's mercy to his people. "He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness."

So different is the outlook of the first chapters and the last that many scholars hold that the latter must have been written by another hand. Yet we may readily understand that Micah changed his tone and outlook as the years passed, and that though he began as the prophet of judgment, he later became "the prophet of restoration, of divine forgiveness, and of Israel's future glory."

The Book as Literature. The first three chapters are intensely stern, reminding one of Isaiah. The next chapters are spoken in a softer mood, and contain the wonderful promises of the Messianic age. Throughout the book one is struck by the beauty and force of Micah's words. He is "a master of artistic and effective rhetoric, of impassioned, epigrammatic style."

Its Lessons for Today. The sins which Micah denounces do not belong only to that far distant age. "Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable . . . wicked balances, a bag of deceitful weights?" questions Micah in our text from his oracles. "The inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth." This morning's paper discloses a despicable form of graft. It asserts that during the previous administration more than a million quarts of adulterated milk—about half of the city's daily supply—were sold daily in New York City through the connivance of crooked inspectors in the Department of Health. The same paper announces the impeachment of a Federal Judge on charges of "high crimes and misdemeanors." And there is chronicled the usual number of "ordinary" thefts and murders. Do we need in our land today the lessons of Micah and the other outspoken prophets of that far-away time?

There are three verses of Micah which every one should know by heart: his vision of peace, 4.3; his prophecy concerning the Messiah, 5.2; and his definition of true religion, 6.8. There is no greater saying in the whole Old Testament than Micah 6.8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The Authorship of the Book. The odes and orations which are gathered in this one book make it the second longest prophetical book in the Bible. How many of them were written by Isaiah is a much-discussed question. In general, chapters 1 to 34 are the words of the prophet Isaiah, and it is from this section only that our lessons are taken.

The Prophet Isaiah and His Message. The greatest of the prophets of the eighth century B. C., in truth the greatest of all the prophets, was Isaiah, the son of Amoz. He was one of the most wonderful men of the Old Testament. Whether or not he was of royal lineage—the brother of the king, as the rabbis said—he was regal in character, a courtier and a scholar. He preached at Jerusalem during the last forty years of the eighth century, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. His odes and orations were treasured in the memories of a band of faithful disciples, just as he had delivered them, and at his direction were written down, Isa. 8.16; 30.8. According to tradition he met a martyr's death at the hands of King Manasseh.

Isaiah was orator, poet, statesman, theologian, reformer. We have an example of his great oratorical skill and his use of pictorial speech in our lesson from the fifth chapter. "His platform was the busy thoroughfare, the steps of the temple, the corner of the street; and we can without difficulty picture for ourselves the prophet, now with a few disciples at his feet, again with thousands of Jerusalem's citizens hanging on his words; a young man when his heart was stirred by the profligacy of his times; a middle-aged man when he describes the coming doom of Samaria; an old man, yet still full of fire and vigor in those last days when Sennacherib's host threatened to wipe Israel off the face of the earth."

Only Moses was superior to Isaiah as the statesman. From the year of King Uzziah's death, 739 B. C., until the fall of Jerusalem in 701 B. C., Isaiah interpreted to his people the purposes of God, in language which glows with moral fervor. We have the historical background of his career in the Second Book of Kings. There we see the gradual advance westward of Assyria, the taking of cities on the north-eastern border of Syria in 740 B. C., the fall of Damascus in 732 B. C., of Samaria in 721 B. C., of the Philistine cities in 711 B. C., and of Jerusalem in 701 B. C.

Isaiah faced conditions squarely, saw their true meaning and far-reaching tendencies, and counseled kings and nations from the standpoint of the Divine Ruler who shapes all history. He well understood the weakness of the Egyptian power and the vanity of her promises; he saw the greatness of the Assyrian power and the disastrous results that alliance with her would bring about; he wisely counseled the avoidance of all entangling alliances with foreign powers, and the reliance upon the help of the Lord. When once allegiance to Assyria was promised, however, he knew the futility of breaking away, and in the face of the bitterest opposition he counseled loyalty to the promises made. He was a stern lover of justice, and when still later Sennacherib's demands were clearly unjust, he advised Hezekiah to defy him. "Through the varying political crises he calmly and with that conviction which comes only from the grasp of eternal principles, and an intimate touch with him who rules the universe, offered counsels which, though usually rejected, were shown by later events to have been supremely wise and sane."

As a preacher of righteousness he was open-eyed and outspoken, seeing everything, "from the court intrigues to a woman's crimping-pins." With absolute sincerity, uncompromising severity, and unflinching courage he attacked the evils of his time, pouring contempt upon weak, cowardly King Ahaz as readily as in scathing words he denounced the social and political corruption of the people.

There are four great ideas in Isaiah's writings: the sin of the nation, the impending punishment at the hands of Assyria, the survival of the remnant, and the happy future. In prosperous days he preached that calamity was rapidly approaching because of flagrant unrighteousness, but when the calamity had come his words were full of hope.

Nowhere is Isaiah greater than when he refers to the reign of the Righteous King, who is to us the Christ, the One who shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as a shade of a great rock in a weary land.

The Book of Isaiah as Literature. Sechele, a savage chief who had learned to read the Bible, amazed Livingstone one day by remarking, "Teacher, this man Isaiah is a very fine man: he knows how to write." His untutored mind had unaided discovered something of Isaiah's magnificent literary genius. Washington Irving said that before beginning to write he usually read a passage from Isaiah "to fire his mind," and Daniel Webster's customary preparation for the delivery of an oration was to read the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. "The beauty of expression as well as the depths of thought, are marvelous," said Matthew Arnold.

The book has rich variety and splendor of diction—epic, lyric, and dramatic. Isaiah has been called the most poetic of all the bards of Israel. In our English translation we are unable to see that the greater part of his addresses are poetry, and that "through them all a marvelous lilt and balanced parallelism runs."

More marked is the presence of the dramatic element, "beginning at the moment of Isaiah's first entrance, where, like the Greek chorus, he calls upon heaven and earth to witness the ingratitude of Israel; clearly manifest in the watchman of chapter twenty-one who brings tidings from Babylon and answers the call of Edom; and especially prominent at the close of chapter ten, when the terrible Assyrian speeds from point to point till at Nob he shakes his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion."

It is the soul that makes the great speaker and writer, and Isaiah's was a great soul. "He lived perpetually in the glory of the divine majesty." Nowhere will one find profounder thought combined with more glowing feeling, more powerful imagination, and more eloquent oratory—impassioned and moving—than in the Book of Isaiah. The prophet wields at times a two-edged sword, and all his words are instinct with spiritual fire. Where shall we find his equal in versatility? He is a master of satire and pathos, of proverb and parable, of simile and metaphor. His figures of speech are always concrete, and so apt that however often one reads them their power strikes one anew. From his first words where the heavens are contrasted with the earth, the heavens and earth together with Jehovah, Jehovah with man, his sinful creation, and man with his faithful ox and ass, Isaiah's vivid style is marked by sudden contrasts.

It is difficult to select passages of sustained oratory, vigorous rhetoric, exquisite literary quality, because they are so numerous. The fifty-third chapter is sublime.

Its Lessons for Today. Only the Book of Psalms of the Old Testament books has been more helpful than the Book of Isaiah. We can go to Isaiah for light upon the political and social questions which are always with us, and listen to his tremendous invectives against drunkenness and greed and injustice. "The city is the great social problem of the age, and Isaiah is the Old Testament specialist on that theme. The sins of the city, its volatile and vibrant life, its opulence, and its pride, all find place in his thought and speech. Our modern city problems are more complex than were those of his time; for sin, which was then largely individual, is today organized and exploited for profit. But the eternal principles which Isaiah applied to the evils of his day are the principles of our age and for all time."

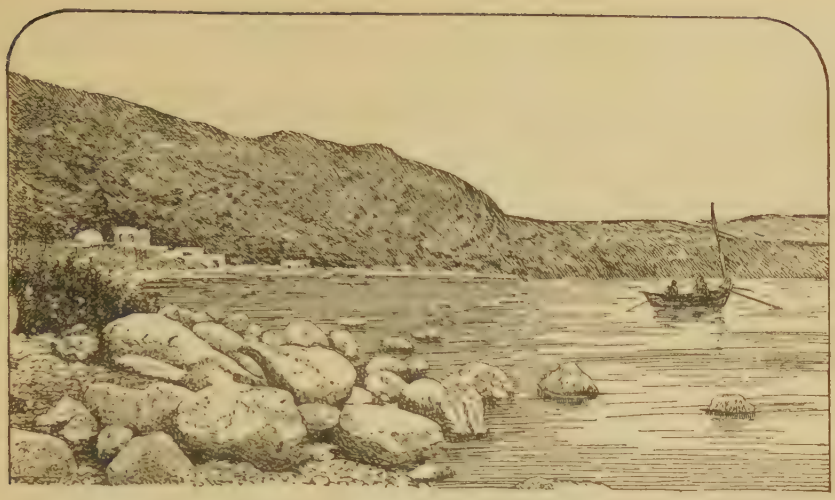
No other inspired writer has so represented the sublime majesty and holiness of God. We have a lesson upon this theme in the vision which made Isaiah a prophet.

> "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts:
> The whole earth is full of his glory."

These words on the lips of the adoring seraphim give Isaiah's lofty conception of God.

There is no prophet up to this time who so emphasized the individual responsibility of man. "Come back, come back, for why will ye die?" is the refrain which follows his denunciations. If you will only return to the Lord, all will yet be well, your fate rests with you.

Especially is Isaiah the prophet of trust. We have his song of trust in the Golden Text for one of our lessons from Isaiah: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."



FISHING ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

FIRST QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Aim: To discover, through a study of the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles, the Christian way of living in our day.

LESSON I—JANUARY 2

THE CHRISTIAN A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: He saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. Mark 2.14

LESSON Mark 1.16-20; 2. 13-17; 1 John 2.6 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.5-11

MARK 1.16 And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they left the nets, and followed him. 19 And going on a little further, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

MARK 2.13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphæus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. 15 And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, *How is it* that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

1 JOHN 2.6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

1. FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS, Mk. 1.16-20. One day when walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee Jesus saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter, Mt. 4.18) and Andrew, casting a net in the sea. They were letting it down and then drawing it up, first on one side of the boat and then on the other. Or, as was often done, they had gone out in a boat to let a sweep-net down and then would draw it in from the land. Jesus called to them across the blue water,

saying, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." They were not to give up their nets in following him, but to change them—as his figure of speech means.

This was not the first time the two brothers had seen Jesus: see The Historical Background. They at once left the nets and followed him. "Mark both their faith and their obedience," comments Chrysostom, the great fourth century preacher of Constantinople: "For though they were in the midst of their work—and ye know how greedy a thing fishing is—yet when they heard his command they delayed not, they procrastinated not, they said not, 'Let us return home and converse with our kinsfolk,' but they forsook all and followed."

To you and me Jesus says: Stay by your nets, your school, your home, your business, and follow me; do everything in my Spirit, and do whatever comes to your hand to do for others for my sake.

"Lead me, Man Divine,
Where'er thou wilt, only that I may find,
At the long journey's end, thy image there,
And grow more like to it."

Farther on Jesus found two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, mending their nets in a boat, and they were equally prompt in obeying his call to follow him. "Straightway," says Mark, "they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him."

"The cost fell on Zebedee," Bishop McConnell thinks. "We see and hear James and John. We are charmed by their eloquence and zeal. Let us not forget Zebedee, who gave them their chance. He never writes any Gospels or Epistles, but his signature is eloquent at the bottom of a check. The bright, ardent young apostle starts out from the college amid the plaudits of those who expect him to turn the world upside down. If ever he does thus revolutionize the world, it will be because Zebedee, back among the boats and the nets and the fish, supplied him the leverage."

II. MATTHEW CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS, Mk. 2.13, 14. Levi, the son of Alphæus, better known by his other name of Matthew (Mt. 9.9), was a hated publican, a collector of taxes. As Jesus was passing by, Matthew was sitting at the place of toll, in the employ of Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee. Probably the tax he was collecting was that levied on the caravans which passed through Capernaum on their way to and from Egypt and Damascus. Jesus saw Matthew and also said to him, "Follow me." Several different Greek words in the New Testament are translated by our one word *saw.* The Greek verb in this verse means that Jesus looked at Matthew closely, contemplatively, and then after that long look he said, "Follow me." The Pharisees glanced at Matthew and said to themselves, "A publican and a sinner," and they drew their robes a little closer as they passed by. Jesus looked at him, and knowing his thoughts, perhaps said to himself, "Here is the man who shall write a Gospel," and then he chose him to be one of his close companions during his public ministry.

"Professing Christians looked at John Newton, and they saw only a drunken sailor, foul in speech and impure in soul, not worth bothering about; Jesus looked at him and saved him, and out of that unlikely material made the celebrated theologian and preacher. It takes love to see, and that is the reason Jesus sees such splendid jewels where you and I are blind" (Robert F. Coyle).

Whether or not Matthew had seen and talked with Jesus before this, we do not know, but now had come the time for decision. He had to decide between his old, well-tried life of fair prosperity and a new, unknown life of sacrifice. He arose and followed Jesus. He recognized the power of Jesus, and willingly yielded his life to his direction.

"A Christian is just one who does what the Lord Jesus tells him: neither more nor less than that makes one a Christian" (George Macdonald).

III. WHOM JESUS CAME TO CALL, Mk. 2.15-17. Matthew gave a great feast for his new Master and fellow disciples (Luke 5.29), and so many were the guests, both publicans and sinners, that the gathering must have been held in the courtyard of the house, as was often the case. When they were reclining at table, some scribes

of the Pharisees walked in, as any wayfarer might in the East. They entered to look on, but they stayed to criticize. "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" they said to his disciples. Publicans were social outcasts; they were hated for their dishonesty and extortion, and especially because they were regarded as unpatriotic in collecting taxes for a foreign power.

Jesus heard the question and answered for the disciples: "They that are whole, that is, you self-righteous Pharisees, have no need of a physician, a Savior, but they that are sick, those you call publicans and sinners, need him. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." The originality in this remark, as Dr. A. B. Bruce points out, lies in the application: The physician goes where he is needed, therefore I am here among the people you contemptuously designate publicans and sinners. "It is the irony of a grieved heart when he describes his critics as 'righteous'; they needed healing, but they knew it not, and thus the Physician of souls was forced to leave them alone" (A. E. E. Garvie).

"The one simple thing we have to do is to go through life hand in hand with Christ" (Henry Drummond).

IV. THE CREDENTIAL OF A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST, 1 Jn. 2.6. One who claims fellowship with Christ, claims to be abiding in him, says the apostle John, ought to conform his life to that of Christ, to live in accordance with Christ's ideals and principles, to walk even as he walked.

The credential of a Christian, a follower of Christ, is correspondence to Christ in character and conduct. Were all nominal Christians Christlike, what a revolution would there be in business and social and national life! If all Christians were controlled by the spirit and purpose of Christ—in the realms of industry and commerce, of school and home, of state and nation—then all the world would soon become Christian.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Casting a net in the sea, Mark 1.16. The cast net is in the form of a bag, coming to a point at the bottom, to which a long rope is attached. It has a mouth about three feet in diameter, with weights around it, which keep it open when thrown, and close it when it sinks through the water. Sometimes this is used from a boat. When used from the shore, the fisherman wades or swims in, and throws it with great dexterity to a considerable distance, and then draws it in by the rope. This was the net that Simon and Andrew were employing when Jesus called them to follow him and become "fishers of men."—James Neil.

"The successful use of the net requires a keen eye, an active frame, and great skill in throwing," writes W. M. Thompson. "The fisherman must, too, be patient, watchful, wide-awake, and prompt to seize the exact moment to throw; these were qualities needed by fishers of men."

They left the nets, and followed him, Mark 1.18. We might think it a difficult matter for any one to leave his occupation and, without means of earning a livelihood, follow a leader from place to place. But we must remember that the climate of Palestine is more genial than ours, and that food and clothing and shelter there are more simple. Yet there was sacrifice of comfort and home ties. One who lightly said to Jesus, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus reminded that "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Call to Permanent Discipleship. After his victory over temptation in the wilderness, Jesus remained for a time in the neighborhood where John was preaching and baptizing. One day John bore his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah, and pointed him out to two of his own disciples, Andrew and John, as "the Lamb of God." They followed Jesus, and the next day Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, and John, it is believed, brought his brother James, to Jesus. Philip was called, and he brought Nathanael. It was after Jesus settled in Capernaum that he called the four fishermen to permanent discipleship, as recorded in our lesson text.

John's Definition of a Christian. Some time during the first decade of the second century the Apostle John wrote his First Epistle. He had a definite purpose in all his writings. The purpose of his Gospel was to *quicken* faith, John 20.31.

The purpose of his First Epistle was to *strengthen* faith, 1 Jn. 5.13. In the second chapter he has been declaring that the proof that we know God is that we keep his commandments. The man who claims to have a knowledge of God, but fails to keep his commandments, John brands as a liar. Such a man may know much about God, his mind may have grasped many truths in regard to him, but if he has not learned to love and to obey him, he does not *know* him. God is only known in his Son, and the proof of one's abiding in him, continuing in fellowship with him, is obedience to his commands, a striving to walk as he walked.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is the *Sea of Galilee.* This lake was celebrated for its great shoals of fish. Fish from its waters are sent to Samaria and Jerusalem and even to Damascus. In the time of Christ there were several hundred fishing boats on the lake.

Capernaum, where Matthew gave the banquet in honor of Jesus, was on the northwestern shore of the lake.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Luke 6.46-49; John 1.35-51.

The all-important work of a Church school teacher is "fishing for men." The all-important step in becoming a successful fisher is to begin. When Mr. Moody was asked how to begin, he replied, "Go at it."

A boy who wants to skate may read instructions about skating and may watch expert skaters gliding over the ice, but he can never know how to skate until he makes the attempt and perseveres in his attempts despite falls. He who would lead others to Christ may, and should, read how to do personal work, and may, and should, study the methods of successful workers, but he will never himself become a successful "fisher of men" until he actually tries to lead others to Christ and perseveres in his efforts.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
RECEIVING JESUS AS SAVIOR AND LORD

Beginning the Lesson. What did Jesus mean when he bade Peter and Andrew, James and John, and Matthew follow him? Was this the first time they had seen him? Is it likely that at this time they realized all that following Jesus involved? The ministry of Jesus was an itinerant one—he went about from place to place, preaching and teaching and healing. The nature of his work made the fellowship and apprenticeship of disciples necessary. The prophets had had their scholars, the scribes had their schools; it was a long-established custom. Jesus had many things to say which only trained hearers could fathom, many things to do which only loyal disciples could undertake, a legacy of service to leave which only skilled followers could inherit. He gathered around himself twelve disciples: from what ranks in life did they come? How were they called?

The Disciples Followed Straightway.

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he knocked full loud at my chamber door;
But the morn was fair, and my heart was gay;
"I'll dally a while on the primrose way,
And I'll come," said I, "when the morning's o'er."

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he lingered patiently at the gate;
Gray shadows were falling, the night was near;
"Life's joys are so sweet, and my friends so dear,
I will come," said I, "when the night is late."

"Child, follow me," the Master cried,
As he walked away through the darkness deep;
And the night had fallen, and the birds were still;
"Linger," said I, "at the foot of the hill,
And I'll come when the world is hushed in sleep."

"Master, I come," I cried at length,
"Heart weary to serve at thine own dear side,
Thou hast called me long, but I come at last."
But mine eyes were dim and my strength was past,
And I could not follow the Crucified.—Unknown.

The Disciples Received Jesus as Savior and Lord. One of the chapters in a book of Phillips Brooks' sermons deals with our theme. He has been telling the well-known story of how the disciples followed Jesus until they came to the end of his earthly life. "Little by little his love tightened around them. And at last there came the cross. He died for them. For their help, for their hope, he went patiently on and on, and at last the cross completed everything. Then gratitude and admiration overwhelmed and gathered them into the depths of love past all escape. As a shell that has floated on the sea at last fills itself with the sea, and sinks into the sea; so these disciples' lives, which had floated on the bosom of Christ's love, when at last the crucifixion came, filled themselves with Christ's love and sank into its depths. Thenceforward they must follow him.

"They followed him until he brought them to their crosses. They followed him across the dark river. They are following him to-day in some bright fields of the unknown eternity. But wherever they are following him, they are following in him these eternal principles—the love of brethren, the love of right, the love of God.

"Is that the gospel? Indeed it is! All that the Savior does for us—the priceless forgiveness of our sins, the opened prospect of eternal life—it all has its great, one, only purpose, that by the power of gratitude we may be bound into his service and made to follow him with an unquestioning faith. Men, women, little children, all may follow him. Through our separate ways of light or darkness he will lead us all until he brings us to God, in whom we shall surely find ourselves."

A Boston student once came to Phillips Brooks greatly troubled in mind. "Bishop Brooks," said he, "is conscious personal fellowship with Jesus Christ a part of Christianity?" The great preacher was silent a moment, and then with impressive earnestness he replied, "Conscious personal fellowship with Jesus Christ *is* Christianity."

Hearing the Call. The greatest hour in any man's life is the hour when he comes face to face with Jesus Christ, and hears the Master's call to the fellowship and service of his Kingdom. To no two men, perhaps, does that call come at exactly the same time or in exactly the same way. It comes to one as he stands in the freshness of youth's morning at the parting of the ways, conscious that character and destiny as well as vocation depend on the choice he makes. It comes to another in the hour of spiritual awakening, when the merely formal and conventional in religion suddenly becomes no longer bearable, and the pent-up desires of personality cry aloud for satisfaction and self-expression. It meets yet a third in the day when life is redeemed from some sin that threatened to enslave—from some senseless round of pleasure that was fast engulfing the soul.

The incident of Matthew's call disabuses our minds of the idea that there must be something sensational or dramatic about religious experience if it is to be really vital. The circumstances are so suggestive of those in which many of us find ourselves today in the hour of meeting with Christ. To few is it given as it was to Saul of Tarsus to see a vision and to hear a voice from heaven, but to many a man and many a woman does the call of Jesus come to-day, as it did to Matthew that afternoon in the midst of life's busy everydays.

How quiet, how unsensational, how totally lacking in the dramatic and even the spectacular—how almost commonplace it all was! Just a little knot of men passing down the street of an Eastern city—a new teacher with a handful of disciples—a brief word of invitation, a quick decision taken and another follower won. Did you ever stop to ask why so simple an incident should lead to so great an issue? So homely an invitation to a change of life so marked? It was because of the Man who spoke and the way in which the invitation was given. It was because of all that had been going on in Matthew's mind before the meeting with Jesus. Read the story again—told with the matchless art of the Gospel writer within the compass of a single verse; and you will feel that you are meant to read a great deal between the lines. Matthew had heard of Jesus before. Matthew had seen him and heard him speak. Matthew had gone down to the lakeside when the day's work in the city was done, and joined himself to the company of those who were listening to Jesus. Matthew had heard the voice of God and had seen the vision of the

Kingdom. And Matthew was thinking—thinking deeply. He lay awake at night haunted by the memory of what he had seen and heard. He fell asleep only to dream about Jesus—Jesus and the Kingdom—the man he was and the man he had it in him to be—the life he was now living, and the life to which Jesus was calling men. Deep down in that man's subconscious mind a great resolve was forming. Thus it came about that when Jesus passed by the tax-gatherer's booth, and spoke the simple words, "Follow me," Matthew was ready, and rose up at once to respond.

Christ is calling today for men, for men who will give him the devotion of their hearts and the service of their lives, and who will come to find in his fellowship and in the work of his Kingdom the satisfaction of their deepest need and the fulfilment of their loftiest ambitions.

It was to young men that the Master first made his appeal, it was from them he won the most immediate and wholehearted response, and it has been through their instrumentality all down the ages that the work of his Kingdom has been carried on.

Why is Jesus Christ calling to men today? It is because he needs them, and because of the work they can do for his Kingdom.

It is because of what they will find in his fellowship—because of what he has to give them in the satisfaction of their deepest need, and in the way of fullest equipment for service.

It is because of the latent possibilities he sees in their lives. He sees you not merely as you are, but as you may become. He sees what you have in you to be and to do, and it is because of the possibilities latent, undeveloped—perhaps undiscovered yet—that he sees in every one of us, that he is calling us today.

What response will you make to the call and challenge of Jesus?—Condensed from a Sermon by D. P. Thomson.

Follow Him! Does Christ save you from your sin? Call him Savior!
Does he free you from the slavery of your passions? Call him Redeemer!
Does he teach you as no one else has taught you? Call him Teacher!
Does he mold and master your life? Call him Master!
Does he shine upon the pathway that is dark to you? Call him Guide!
Does he reveal God to you? Call him the Son of God!
Does he reveal Man? Call him the Son of Man!

Or, in following him are your lips silent in your incapacity to define him and his influence upon you? Call him by no name, but follow him!—Howard Bliss.

From Enlistment to Love. The church has made acceptance of the doctrine of the person of Christ, instead of willingness to espouse the cause of Jesus, the one test of fellowship and of admission to the church and to its activities. My contention is, that to urge and invite men, irrespective of creed, to coöperate actively and devotedly in furthering the cause of Jesus is the pressing need of the church today, and that it can be done without disloyalty to or surrender of the person of Christ.

This can be done because we have in the Gospels the warrant of Jesus himself in so doing. His invitation at the outset was, "Follow me." Later, after due acquaintance, came the question, "Whom think ye that I am?" The person of Christ thus is not supplanted by the cause of Jesus, but merely put second in chronological sequence and development. Moreover, and chiefly, this, Jesus's own method, is the surest and most satisfactory way of winning men to the person of Christ—this indirect way of first getting their enthusiasm and activity enlisted for his cause.

Lafayette embraced the cause of the Colonies, when first he heard of it, with all the ardor of youth and the self-disregarding consecration of a liberty-loving heart; it was not till afterwards, and as a result of his activity in the cause, that he fell in love with its leader, George Washington. If we want men to fall in love with Jesus, the simplest way is to enlist them in the cause, and, as their experiences in the service of that cause deepen and widen and take progressive hold upon their lives, as they begin to appreciate the glories of the character that could conceive a cause so comprehensive, so adequate to the multitudinous necessities of humanity, of a heart that could give itself so utterly to the need of the world, of a courage so sublimely indifferent to all personal considerations, it will be as impossible for them to escape the spell of such loveliness, and responding to it with an answering love, as it would be for a flower to withhold its fragrance from the wooing of the sun.

"This is mere humanitarianism!" will be the icy comment from the pursed-up lips of a doctrinaire theology. I do not know what mere humanitarianism is; one thing I know; this is following the Galilean; this is devotion to the cause of Jesus; this is consecration to the kingdom of God.—Charles P. Fagnani.

For Discussion. 1. Following Christ. See Quiet Talks on Following the Christ, by S. D. Gordon; Chapter IX of The Master's Way, by C. R. Brown.

2. Salvation and Belief. See Chapter VII of The Essence of Religion, by Borden P. Bowne.

3. If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What effect will doing a kindness to one whom you dislike have upon your attitude toward him? 2. How are the counsels in verses 29 and 30 to be observed? 3. Explain the allusion in verse 38. 4. From whom will the reward promised in verse 35 come, and what will be its nature? 5. Is the generous man always prosperous? What is his sure reward? 6. Can the Golden Rule be followed in the home? In business? Among nations?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. What two pairs of brothers do we hear about in our lesson text? What was their occupation? Where were they when Jesus called them? What did Jesus say to them? "Come ye after me." It was not easy for Peter and Andrew and James and John to obey that call. They had their homes and their trade—what would become of these without them? And what about themselves—how were they to live? And what would they have to face in their new venture—privation and suffering, perhaps. Would Jesus succeed in his new mission? If he failed, what would it mean to them? All these things might have made them hesitate. Did they? Jesus wanted them, and that was enough for them. Then and there, straightway, they gave up their occupation, left all, and joined themselves to Jesus.

What was it Jesus promised to make of them? Fishers of men: What does that mean? The time came, years afterwards, when men were afraid to talk about being Christians where the Romans could hear them and might put them to death. And then, when one wished to make it known to another that he was a follower of Christ, he would stoop down and trace the outline of a fish in the dust of the road, and if the other were a Christian he would understand. This was because Jesus chose fishermen to be his first followers, and because he told them that he would make them fishers of men.

The First Essential in Following Jesus. If you are going to play football, you have got to kick off. At least somebody has! It is not enough to pick sides or take sides—the ball has got to be set in motion before the game can start. You may have two teams out spoiling for the fray; you may have a first-class captain and a great crowd there to watch the game and cheer their favorites on to victory; you may have a brand new ball and a brand new referee; but there's nothing doing until some one kicks off. It is only then the game starts and things begin to happen!

And so it is in the greater game of life. You have got to take sides, but that isn't enough. You have got to kick-off—to make a beginning. Perhaps you have heard or read about people "getting converted," as Paul was on the road to Damascus, or giving their hearts and lives to Christ, as some of us have done. That just means, in plain, homely English, that they have not only taken sides with Jesus Christ, but have kicked off. They have made a beginning in the Christian life. They know which side they are on, and they have begun to make their contribution to the success of the team. We have not only taken sides with Jesus Christ, but have kicked off. We don't say we have got very far in the Christian life—we know we have at least made a start! Have you? If not, why not make a beginning today?—From an address to Boys by D. P. Thomson.

What It Means to Follow Jesus. What is it to be a Christian? The men who wrote the Gospels are all agreed that Jesus's favorite exhortation was "Follow me!" Those who followed him were at first called disciples, but later became known as Christians. A Christian, according to the New Testament, is one who follows Jesus.

But right here another question must be faced and answered. What is it to follow Jesus? Is it to imitate him, his dress, his manner, his way of life? Must we work for a season in a carpenter's shop, then travel from city to city as a wandering preacher, speaking parables and exhorting people to be good? Oh, no! To follow a man means to accept his principles and to obey his orders.

Sometimes followers are known as "adherents," because they stick to or cling to their leader. Sometimes they are called "supporters," because they hold up their leader's cause. Sometimes they are called "backers," because the leader can fall back upon them for influence or assistance. Sometimes they are called "disciples" or "learners," because they are instructed by their leader and make his ideas their own. A Christian, then, is a follower, an adherent, a supporter, a backer, a learner of Jesus. Any one who accepts Jesus's teaching and obeys or tries to obey his orders is a Christian.

But what is the teaching of Jesus? It can all be summed up, I think, in one sentence. God is a loving Father and all human beings are his children, and every one of them can come to the Father through his well-beloved Son Jesus. And what are his commandments? They can all be reduced to one—love. When men asked him to tell them the greatest of all commandments, he said, "Love God and love your neighbor," and he never added to that. There is nothing else which it is possible to add. Shortly before Jesus died on the cross he said to his disciples: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you." This was in reality nothing but the old commandment made new by being held in the light of Jesus's life. Let us fix it, then, firmly in our mind that *a Christian is one who believes something about Jesus and who does something for him.* He believes that God is a Father, that all men are his children, and that all men can come to the Father only through Jesus. A Christian is a doer as well as a believer, and the one thing he must do is to love.

How can one become a Christian, a follower of Jesus? When Jesus said to certain men in the first century, "Follow me," and they followed him, they became Christians from that hour. So it is today. One became a Christian in Palestine by making up his mind to be one, and one becomes a Christian in America in precisely the same way. You all know what it means to make up your mind. You make up your mind to go to school, to read a book, to play a game. Just so you make up your mind to go to school to Jesus, to take lessons from him, to read the Book which tells about him, to listen to him and to obey him.

Of course it means a great deal to become a Christian. It means turning away from everything you believe to be wrong; it means turning toward everything you believe to be right. It means that you are to speak the truth, for speaking falsehoods is breaking the commandment to love; and it means that you are to be honest in word and deed, for dishonesty is also a violation of the law of love. It means that you are to control your temper and hold your tongue, for if you do not do this you sin against love.

But some boy now puts in this question: "Is it not necessary to have faith in order to become a Christian, and must not one repent and be converted and be born again, and be regenerated?" And the answer is, "Yes, you must believe and repent and be converted and be born again, but you need not bother about any of these names. All of these things have been fulfilled whenever one makes up his mind to follow Jesus. No one could or would make up his mind to follow a leader unless he had faith in that leader, and the act of turning from an old leader to a new one is conversion; and no one would ever turn, were there not a change of mind, which is repentance; and a change of heart, which is regeneration. But the mastery of big words is not necessary to make one a Christian. A Christian is a follower of Jesus, and any one who follows him has repented and has been converted and has been born again.

One must not only make up his mind to follow Jesus, but he must begin forthwith to do it. And the first act by which he makes it clear to the world that he is indeed a follower of Jesus is called "confession." The act by which Jesus wishes his disciples to confess that they are his is baptism, and that is why every one who makes up his mind to follow Jesus is sooner or later baptized.

How can one know that he is a Christian? It is easy enough to become a Christian and to know that one is a Christian, but to remain a Christian is not so easy. It is easy to enroll as a pupil in a school, but it is not so easy to finish the course. Let me give you three bits of advice, each bit expressed in a word of one syllable.

The first word is "Watch." Keep your eyes open. Do not get careless. Watch, first of all, your body. What you need is energy, and you cannot secure energy unless you keep your body in the very best possible condition. Next, watch your mind. Hold it up to a certain high standard of duty. Do not let it become a nest for thoughts that are vile. Do not allow it to debate such questions as, "Ought I to speak the truth?" or "Ought I to do what is right?" Watch also your

associates. You can catch measles and whooping-cough, you can also catch character. If your companions are found to be pulling you away from the right path, then give them up, and choose others. Never forget that books also are companions, and that a bad or foolish book can do an incalculable amount of mischief. Remember it is Jesus who says, "Watch."

He also says, "Pray." You are always in need of strength. Such strength you can obtain from Jesus. He has promised it, and he always keeps his promises. Speaking to Jesus is prayer. He is always your Friend, so that his help when asked for is absolutely certain.

The third word of counsel is "Work!" Whenever men became his followers, Jesus sent them out at once to do something. Every talent must be employed, and if even a single talent is not employed, then the possessor of it is disgraced. The word "work" was often on the lips of Jesus, and another word he was fond of was "service." The highest place in all the world is the place in which one can make himself most useful to the largest number of needy people.—Condensed from My Father's Business, by C. E. Jefferson.

A Follower of Jesus Ought to Walk Even as He Walked. The earliest language was picture language. As S. D. Gordon says, it is a great help sometimes to dig down under a word and get the picture. Here is a man standing on a roadway, earnestly beckoning, and pointing to the road he is in. The Old Testament word for this picture of our word *follow* is literally *same road,* and the word which Jesus himself used means *in behind.* Follow me, take the same road that I do, get in behind and help in my work—that was what the call of Jesus meant to Andrew and Peter, James and John, and Matthew.

A writer in The Congregationalist talks about how to follow aright. He recalls a company of boys drilling in the open square of a village. With short, crisp commands they were put through their motions by their leader. At last, with a note of impatience in his voice, he cried: "Fellows, quit looking down at your feet! Eyes to the front! Your feet will follow your eyes!"

Our feet do follow our eyes. We look steadily at what is good, and we walk towards it. We fix our eyes on what is wrong, and we find ourselves drawing near it. This is what the Bible means when it bids us run "looking unto Jesus." As we look to him every day, we come ever nearer to him, and grow more like him. Our feet follow our eyes. We ought to walk even as he walked.

Your New Year's Record. Let's make believe that each one of you boys and girls is a Victrola needle, and we will call this wax record the year 1927. Each circle on the record is a day, and you are the needle that makes a daily record all through the year. Suppose that everything you said or did each day was marked on your Victrola record!

Now suppose that at the end of the year, your Victrola record could be played, so that you could hear everything you said and did every day in the year. Then whoever heard your record played would know all about your words and actions that year. Would you be proud of every part of your record?

Let's begin this year and make a record full of good words and actions about which we shall not be ashamed to have people know. Remember, as your little needle starts out on its daily run through the circle of hours from sunrise until bedtime that you want to make the best kind of marks on your record that day. Try to make to-day's record better than yesterday's. Then, on December 31st, you may be proud of your 1927 record.—Harold S. Winship, in The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermons. Promptness adds great value to obedience.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where are the words of our lesson recorded in Matthew? 2. What do we call the discourse in which Matthew gives them? 3. What did Jesus mean by counseling one to "offer the other cheek," verse 29? 4. When did Jesus pray for those who despitefully used him? (Lk. 23.34.) 5. Are the words of verses 29 and 30 to be followed literally? 6. What do they mean? 7. Can the Golden Rule be followed at home and at school? 8. See what you can do this week which no one but a Christian would do.

LESSON II—JANUARY 9

THE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5.48

LESSON Luke 6.27-38 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 5.1-10

LUKE 6.27 But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, 28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. 29 To him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. 30 Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. 35 But love your enemies, and do *them* good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. 36 Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: 38 give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE LAW OF LOVE, verses 27-31. See Matthew 5.39-41; 7.12; 5.42-48. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies." Be ruled by love in your treatment of them. See Light from Oriental Life. At the time when Jesus uttered these words, revenge wreaked upon an enemy was considered noble. Recall how Cicero gloated over the misfortunes of his enemy: he thought himself fortunate on his deathbed that he could say no one had done more good to his friends nor more mischief to his enemies. "The Greek word for *love* in our text is carefully chosen. It is not demanded that we should love our enemies with a natural and spontaneous affection (*philein*), but with a supernatural Christian love that comes by grace (*agapan*)" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

We all agree with Francis de Sales who says: "It is easy enough to love those who are agreeable and obliging—what fly is not attracted by sugar and honey? But to love one who is cross, perverse, tiresome, is as unpleasant a process as chewing pills." Nevertheless, this is the real touchstone of brotherly love. The way to practice it is to put ourselves in thought in the place of the one who tries us or mistreats us, and to see how we would wish him to treat us if we had his defects and misunderstandings.

We should love our enemies, but Dr. Shailer Matthews is right in saying that love for our enemies is not moral if it deadens our indignation against the crimes they perpetrate.

"Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." This expresses "three stages of enmity: feeling, speech, deed." "Deeds of kindness, words of blessing, and, highest of all, and best help to fulfilling the other two, prayer, are to be our answer to evil" (Alexander Maclaren). Recall Christ's prayer on the cross, Lk. 23.34.

"The sentiment of love is worth much, but it must bear fruit in act. So the practical manifestation of it will follow."

The precepts which follow in verse 29 illustrate in a striking, concrete way, another form of love, non-retaliation, Christ's rule of conduct in the face of wrongful treatment. "Resist not evil," he says: "to him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also." One who is not a Christian stands stiffly on his rights; a Christian yields his rights and suffers unmerited treatment, endures a blow and offers the other cheek, prevents a lawsuit by yielding more than his opponent claims. That this counsel is to be observed in the spirit and not in the letter Christ's own conduct recorded in Jn. 18.22, 23, shows. "I venture to think that the ordinary reader, having a little humor in his composition, is not confused by these peculiarities in the teaching of Jesus," is the way Dr. James Stalker speaks of these precepts. "He

perceives that what is described is an ideal; it is with the direction in which every one's face is turned that the Teacher is concerned, rather than with the several steps of the journey; it is not to slaves of the letter he is addressing himself, but to lovers of the spirit. In short, it is the love of man he is teaching, not an array of new commandments intended to rival the endless traditions of the scribes."

"Nothing will do except righteousness; and no other conception of righteousness will do except Christ's conception of it. Attempt to reach righteousness in any way except that of Jesus, and you will find out your mistake" (Matthew Arnold).

"Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." Thus Jesus inculcates the duty of generous giving. It is to be carried the length of cheerfully resigning what is taken from us by force, Dr. A. B. Bruce thinks. "Here it is the case of a sturdy beggar who helps himself to what he does not get for the asking," he says, and questions: "Were there idle, lawless tramps in Palestine in our Lord's time, and would he counsel such treatment of them? If so, it is the extreme instance of not resisting evil." To rightly understand this and similar sayings of Jesus, however, we should keep in mind that he was wont to speak in figures of speech which have a definite but not a literal meaning. "Give to every one that asketh thee": long ago Augustine explained that this means, "Give to every one that asks, but not every thing he asks." It is not wise to give every thing to every one who asks. If men of wealth carried out this injunction literally, all their money would soon be in the hands of the undeserving.

How to give is explained by the Golden Rule which immediately follows this verse: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Love is to guide one in giving. To give to every beggar would be as harmful to him as it would be vexatious and impoverishing to you. Your gifts and your loans are to be suited, not to the asker's wish, but to his welfare. An opportunity to earn money is far better for a man's welfare than a gift of money itself. At this writing there are millions out of employment in Great Britain who are living upon government doles. The result of these doles has been that multitudes of the men will not work when they might.

This letter written by Lincoln to his brother aptly illustrates how this counsel of Christ to give to every one that asks should be taken:—

"Dear Johnson.—Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, 'We can get along very well now,' but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct—what that defect is I think I know: you are not lazy, and still you are an idler. You are now in need of some ready money, and what I propose is that you should go to work, tooth and nail—for somebody who will give you money for it. And then to secure you a fair reward for your labor I now promise you that for every dollar you will between this and the first of May get for your labor I will then give you one other dollar. You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will follow my advice you will find it to be worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you. Affectionately your brother, A. Lincoln."

With the Golden Rule, as we call the words of verse 31, compare the Chinese saying, in Light from Oriental Life, and note how much greater is the force of the former.

The Golden Rule requires the putting of oneself in the other's place. We do not serve others best by doing for them just what we with our circumstances and desires would wish done to us, but by doing for them just what we think would be best for ourselves were we in their circumstances and actuated by their desires. The physician should do for his patient what he would have done to himself were he in that patient's place; the employer should treat his employee as he himself would wish to be treated were he in the employee's place. The principle involves more trouble than the mere doing of a kindness to another; it requires thought, the effort of putting oneself in that other's place to find out what would be the best for that one in his position. And the higher the demand that we make for our own best, truest good, the less danger will there be of our doing a thoughtlessly kind deed for another that is not for his highest good.

II. THE GOODNESS EXPECTED OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS, verses 32-35a. "If you love them that love you, if you do good to them that do good to you, what kind of thanks have you, what kind of reward do you deserve? for even sinners love those that love them." Love given for love is only glorified selfishness. Show your love by unselfishness, by loving your enemies as well as your friends; by doing good to those who do evil to you as well as to those who treat you well; by lending to those from whom nothing will be received as well as to those who will return the favor. And the great argument is that even sinners do good to those that do good to them, lend to sinners expecting to receive as much in return. Of followers of Christ far more is expected.

"Giving good because one has received or hopes to receive it is far below the Christian standard. Giving for the sake of giving, loving not so as to be loved back, but without regard to being loved back, and with a wealth of love beyond any power of others to return—this is the real law of the gospel" (J. R. Miller).

III. KINDNESS AND MERCIFULNESS, verses 35b and 36. "Do all these things—love your enemies, do them good, and lend, never despairing—and your reward shall be great—ye shall be sons of God, for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

"It is an attribute of God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice" (Shakespeare).

IV. BE CHARITABLE IN JUDGMENT AND GENEROUS IN GIVING, verses 37, 38. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; release, set free, a debtor or offender, and ye shall be released." These are general statements which are not to be taken without qualification. The example of Jesus himself shows when judging and condemning is a duty. See Mt. 18.15; 2 Tim. 4.2. Apply the Golden Rule, and judge others as you would that others should judge you.

"An otherwise beautiful character is often made almost repulsive by the single bad habit of censoriousness. It is one of the temptations of the good to indulge in harsh judgment of the faults of others. Cultivating a stern conscience merely for the sake of flaunting goodness is no more Christlike, and no more heart-enriching and satisfying, than grinding for gain to make a display with money."

"Give and it shall be given unto you." Liberal giving and worldly prosperity often go hand in hand. Yet full barns and overflowing bins are quite as often lacking to the bountiful giver, for God's rewards do not always come in the small coin of earth. The sure recompense to the generous giver is spiritual. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." There is a profound principle here for the inner life. Instead of a formula for earthly success—so much alms in exchange for so much prosperity—it is an eternal law in the kingdom of heaven, the law according to which God deals with his children. Wonderful is the enlargement of heart of the Christian who gives himself freely for others. Browning but amplifies Jesus's words in saying:—

"A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich:
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong:
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service that thou renderest."

Give and it shall be given unto you. Do you say that you cannot afford to give? Jesus says you cannot afford not to give.

The reward will be generous—"good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over." This is a figure of speech taken from the way grain was measured for the purchaser by the professional measurer. See the full page illustration given with this lesson, which shows how grain is measured in Palestine today.

Noticing one day a man in the outskirts of Jerusalem sitting cross-legged on the ground with a large measure before him, I stopped to see him shoveling wheat into it with his hands and often shaking the measure that the grain might settle and give room for more. When it was apparently full, he gave it a swift jerk and shook it again, and the grain settled still more. When this method of procedure no longer brought results, he pressed the grain down with both hands, and then heaped it up in a cone until it ran over the sides. Not till then was it good measure,

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MEASURING GRAIN IN BETHLEHEM

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. Luke 6:38

ready to be poured into "the bosom"—the pouch formed by the folds of the long Eastern garment which is fastened by the girdle.

"For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

"In the coin ye pay ye shall be repaid,
When your wages at last fall due."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, verse 27. This had been distinctly the spirit of the largest part of the Law and the Old Testament. Ex. 23.4: If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. Prov. 25.21: If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat. Yet in many passages it had been practically said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy": Dt. 7.2; 23.6; 1 Cor. 20.3; 2 S. 12.31; Ps. 137.8, 9. On these passages the fierce fanaticism of the Pharisaic Jews after the exile had so excessively fed, that we find the Talmud ringing with precepts of hatred the most bitter against all Gentiles, and the ancients had, not unnaturally, been led to the conclusion that detestation of all but Jews was a part of the Jewish religion.—F. W. Farrar.

To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other, verse 29. In the first century there was a tariff regulating the fines that might be collected for injuries received. "If a man has given his neighbor a box on the ear, let him give him a *maneh.* If he has struck him on the cheek, let him give him two hundred *suz*" (a little over thirty-five dollars in value).

From him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also, verse 24. In Palestine the universal and indispensable garments were two: first, the *chetoneth,* the inner vest or shirt, rather unfortunately rendered in our version *coat.* This was a long, loose garment, generally without sleeves, and reaching to the knees or ankles. It was retained at night. Over this during the day was worn the *me'il,* rendered *cloak* in our version, answering to our coat, which had loose sleeves, and was larger than the shirt. This was usually, especially when traveling, fastened around the waist by a girdle, the folds of which were used as pockets for carrying small articles. The *me'il* was also used at night as a blanket, thrown over the sleeper; hence the command in the law of Moses that the (outer) garment taken in pledge was to be restored to the owner in the evening, for he did not require it while working in the day, but needed it as a covering at night. —Tristam.

The Coat and Cloak

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise, verse 31. The One Volume Commentary gives the following sayings as parallels to this one:—

Once a would-be proselyte went to Rabbi Hillel and demanded to be taught the whole Law while he stood upon one leg. The good rabbi said: "What is hateful to thyself, that do not thou to another. This is the whole law, the rest is commentary. Go, thou art perfect." The pious Tobias thus instructs his son Tobit (Tob. 4.15), "What thou thyself hatest, do thou to no man." The Chinese sage Confucius is reported to have said, "Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself." All these are noble sayings, but they fall far short of Christ's Golden Rule, which means, "Not only avoid injuring your neighbor, but do him all the good you can." They simply forbid injuries: Christ commands active benevolence.

With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, verse 38. The rabbis said, "In the measure that a man measureth, others measure to him."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing Upon the Lesson. In our lesson last week, how did John say that a true Christian is like his Lord?

The Ordination of the Twelve Disciples. In Matthew's Gospel, the appointment of the Twelve is followed by Christ's "Ordination Address," to which Augustine was the first to give the title of "The Sermon on the Mount," a title which had come into general use by the time of the Reformation. In Luke 6.20-49, Luke gives an abridgment of the Sermon as given in Matthew. Five of Luke's verses only, 24-26, 39 and 40, are not found in Matthew. Scattered throughout Luke's Gospel are thirty-four other verses which correspond to verses given by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus may have spoken the same words more than once, or Matthew may have grouped into one discourse words that were uttered on different occasions.

The address given by Luke begins with four Beatitudes on the poor, the hungry, the sad, the hated (20-23); and then pronounces four woes on the rich, the satisfied, the glad, the well-spoken-of (24-26); then comes the exhortation of our lesson, (27-38); the exhortation to severe self-examination on the part of those who lead others lest they themselves be found to be hypocrites (39-45); and concludes with an exhortation to obey his words, illustrated by the parable of the Two Foundations (46-49).

Tradition says that the Sermon on the Mount was given from Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, a hill about five miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Matthew 5-13 to 7.5.

Last week we learned that a Christian is a follower of Jesus. Today we learn that Jesus expects great things of his followers. To be a Christian means stout performance as well as brave affirmation. Adult classes will profit from a free discussion of the practicability of following the Golden Rule in business, and of the best methods of giving to every one that asks. In the words of Dean Mathews, "If the Golden Rule is inoperative outside pious books, let us be honest with ourselves and say so. If reconciliation between men is less possible than reconciliation with God, let us say that also. Only let us also not deceive ourselves in another particular. Let us be honest and label ourselves heathen."

In younger classes, be careful not to suggest that your pupils have enemies. Ordinarily happy young people are not conscious of enemies, and should not be led to search about in their minds for people against whom they have some slight grudge and then elevate them to the rank of enemies. The Christian's duty of showing love to all, of not seeking retaliation, of doing all things in the spirit of the Golden Rule, will be as much of the text as you will have time to dwell upon.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. In one of Samuel McChord Crothers' thought-provoking essays he compares our Christian professions to a polished brass poker which stands by the fireplace. The poker shines beautifully in its stand, but it serves no useful purpose. When we actually want to do anything to the fire, we reach around the corner and take hold of a dirty, crooked poker and stir the fire into a blaze. In like manner, he thinks, we keep our Christian principles highly polished, but when we need to get anything actually done, we all too frequently employ some more convenient tools covered with the soot of the dirty world.

Is he right? The Sermon on the Mount is full of beautifully polished Christian principles. Are they not workable? Can they not be used in everyday life? Are the love of enemies, the spirit of non-retaliation, the doing of good without expectation of return, mercifulness, a non-censorious spirit, generosity, the Golden Rule—are all these principles of conduct beautiful to look at and talk about, but inoperative in daily life?

Love Your Enemies, and Do Them Good; Be Merciful; and Judge Not. Self-denying service is in some of our relationships happily spontaneous. Outside the area of intimate friendships, however, there are wide stretches of human relations where tender affection does not apply. There are vulgar people from whom we shrink, bestial people who are repellent to us, unfriendly people whose unkindness we resent. There are racial boundaries across which affectionate relationships do not easily pass; cultural boundaries where, in spite of ourselves, our theoretical brotherhood encounters practical difficulties. Moreover, there are criminally-minded people, cruel and conscienceless, whose depradations on society must be hated and

withstood. In a word, there are multitudes of people whom we do not like. But we can love them and do them good.

The principle of retaliation, of tit for tat, makes too small business for a real life to be preoccupied about. To go through life slapping back each time one is slapped, is the cheapest form of wasting life. After Appomattox, when Robert E. Lee was President of Washington College, a professor derided Grant harshly in Lee's presence. In swift indignation Lee thundered: "Sir, if ever I hear you speak again disrespectfully of General Grant, either you or I will sever connection with this institution." A man in earnest about serious tasks has no time for vindictiveness. Retaliation is the rule of little men; retaliation makes little men. Large spirits always are magnanimous. They even love their enemies and do them good.

John Wesley tells us of a man against whom year after year his choler rose. He thought of him contemptuously as covetous. One day when he gave to one of Wesley's favorite philanthropies a gift that seemed too small, Wesley's indignation burst all bounds, and he raked him fore and aft with scathing condemnation. Wesley tells us in his diary that the man quietly said: "I know a man who at the week's beginning goes to the market and buys a penny's worth of parsnips and takes them home to boil in water, and all that week he has the parsnips for his meat and the water for his drink; and meat and drink alike cost him a penny a week." "Who is the man?" said Wesley. "I am," was the reply. And Wesley adds: "This he constantly did, although he had two hundred pounds a year, that he might pay the debts he had contracted before he knew God. And this was the man that I had thought to be covetous." We cannot be just, to any one whom we do not understand.—Condensed and re-arranged from The Meaning of Service, by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Christ the Christian's Standard. Just as the sense of beauty culminated in Greece some twenty-three centuries ago, so that all our artists bend in admiration over a poor fragment of the Elgin marbles, so the revelation of ethical standards culminated in Palestine. The Parthenon, battered and crumbling, shows us a building beyond which architecture may not go. We may build something different—something more nearly perfect no man hopes to build. So character reached its supreme embodiment and standard in Jesus of Nazareth. We desire no new edition of the Sermon on the Mount, and no modification of the Golden Rule. In the realm of character and religion a greater Master and Leader the world will never see. If with Emerson we still say:

> Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
> As the best gem upon her zone;

we must also say with Robert Browning:

> That one face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows.

The characteristic of Christianity is that its ideal is not embodied in verbal statements, but in a life. The Christian ideal is Christ. To be a Christian is to absorb and share his attitude toward God and man. It is to regard as real what was real to him, to love what he loved, to hate as he hated, to find in the Father what he found, and to reaffirm his valuation of life.—W. H. P. Faunce, in The Educational Ideal of the Ministry.

The Christian Is Challenged to Imitate God. There is on the face of it no more daring challenge ever given to men than this word of Jesus to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. The Lord of the Hebrews was so sacred to the chosen people that it was almost blasphemy even to pronounce his name. Jesus brought God near not only in the sense of making him more intelligible but in the sense of making him imitable. It was a feat of spiritual daring to teach that God could be imitated in his moral perfections.

It was a daring belief also to hold that men could imitate God. The boldness of the utterance that men could imitate God implies a confidence in men which is beyond all estimation.

For more than nineteen centuries the world has been held by the sheer magnificence of the challenge. If Jesus had told men to do as well as they could under any particular circumstances, he would, of course, have expressed a sound moral feeling, for we certainly cannot be held responsible for not doing better than we can. Still, there is no power in such a word. If Jesus made it clear—and he did—

that men are to do all in their power here and now to live like the perfect God, he gave a challenge which itself calls forth power.

Being perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect means acting like the Father in heaven. He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. Perfection for us shows itself in a mind attitude, an attitude of even impartiality to men regardless of how they act toward us.

Give the enemy a chance! Let the sun shine and the rain fall on him! Even if there be evil in his heart, perhaps the sunshine and the rainfall will bring that evil out to the stage where the enemy himself can see it for what it is.

Perfection is not a personal, spiritual luxury to bring one into communion with God alone. It is also a social grace to bring one into communion of good will with one's fellow men.—Condensed from a Chapter in The Just Weight, by Francis J. McConnell.

The Ways.

"To every man there openeth
A way, and ways and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro;
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low,
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go."

For Discussion. 1. The practicability of the Christian life. See Chapter I of The Christian Life in The Modern World, by F. G. Peabody.
2. The law of love. See Chapter XVI of The Master's Way, by Charles R. Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What book in your home do you consider of greatest value? 2. Is it the most used book? 3. Upon which do you spend more time, your Bible or your newspaper? 4. Can you say that your interest in the Bible grows each year? 5. How do you study the Scriptures?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT CHRIST REQUIRES OF US

Beginning the Lesson. The newspapers this week have had an item of news in regard to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, the building which covers the traditional site of the burial place of Christ. Engineers declare that unless repairs are quickly made, the building will collapse. The British authorities in Palestine are ready and anxious to make the building safe, but they cannot get the consent of the wrangling sects who have a joint interest therein. The Latin Church, Greek Church, Armenian Church, Coptic Church, each so bitterly hates the others and is so afraid that a rival will get some advantage that all seem to prefer to let the building fall rather than reconcile their differences and give consent for the needed repairs. They are far from attaining the standard of Christian living set by Christ. What did he say one's attitude toward an enemy should be?

Offer the Other Cheek. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other. It would be easy enough for most persons to obey this counsel literally, for very few are ever struck on the cheek. Of course Jesus did not mean to do just this thing; he used it as an illustration of his thought that one should endure a wrong rather than try to "get even" by doing a wrong in return.

An old woman who was carrying a heavy basket of apples "turned the other cheek" in the way that Jesus meant when a man struck her basket and sent the apples rolling about the walk in every direction. He thought it would be fun to hear her calling him all sorts of names, and stood by with his hands in his pockets while she silently gathered up her fruit. But when at last she looked him in the eye and said, "God forgive you, my boy, as I do," he was speechless with surprise. Then he hastily fumbled in his pockets and, thrusting upon her all the money he had, exclaimed, "Take it. I'll never do such a thing again."

Christ Requires Us to Return Good for Evil. It seldom pays to answer harshness with harshness. The person who speaks unkindly to us feels unkindly. He is

sick or tired or unhappy or worried; or possibly some one has spoken unkindly to him. He needs to be, not roused, but calmed. To give a hard answer to a wrathful person is the height of folly. But "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

We were visiting a gigantic sawmill in Wisconsin. One of the filers took a large saw and, laying it on the bench, pushed it toward a grindstone. After he had finished grinding it he said:

"This saw is made of uncommonly hard steel, yet the grindstone I used is one of the softest in the entire mill. The atoms in hard steel are so compact that the surface is very smooth; you can find almost no inequalities in the surface of a hard-steel saw. In a measure that is true of all hard substances. Put a hard stone with its even surface to a hard piece of steel, and you can see what will happen—plenty of scratching and screeching, but no effective contact. The two hard surfaces repel each other. The saw of hard steel that is laid on a hard grindstone comes off imperfectly sharpened. But when the hard saw is laid on the soft stone the rubbing of the soft particles of stone against the hard metal breaks down the even surface and produces the edges necessary for sawing wood."

Almost daily the chance comes to us either to answer hardness with hardness or to defeat hardness by means of a soft answer. Instinctively we tend to pay folks back in their own coin, but the teaching of Christ is to rise above instinct and to return good for evil. The soft stone is most effective against the hard steel.—The Youth's Companion.

The Golden Rule as Some People Practice It. It was a rainy day and two little children were playing indoors. "Let's play church," said Theodore, and Florence assented. "Now, I'll be the minister," Theodore explained, "and tell you what you must do, and you'll be the people, and you must listen and do what I tell you." He climbed into a chair and began: "Florence, you must be a very good girl, and do whatever your brother wants you to. If he wants your playthings, you must let him have them, and if you want any of his, you must let 'em alone. If he strikes you, you must forgive him. If you strike him, he will tell mother and she will punish you."

Isn't this about the way some older boys and girls seem to feel? What does the Golden Rule say? Can that rule be carried out in our daily lives?

The Golden Rule as Practiced by Macalpin. "You have some wheat to sell?" said the miller to Macalpin.

"I have three thousand bushels," replied the settler.

The miller's eyes narrowed; then he made Macalpin an offer for his wheat that made the thrifty Scot stare. "Why, man," he exclaimed, "at such a price you could make no profit grinding that wheat into flour! What have ye in mind?"

"Selling it for seed grain," replied the miller coolly, for he thought he was sure of his man.

A vision swept before the mind of Macalpin. Misfortune had overtaken the settlement. Early frosts the year before had killed all the grain, and the last that his neighbors had had from the years before had long since gone to keep them and a few cattle alive. They looked into the future with dismay. Macalpin, because he had farmed more extensively and had sturdy sons to help him, had grain stored away from the previous years when prices were low and he had refused to sell his wheat at a loss. Now the miller was offering him money beyond his dreams! But in his vision Macalpin saw the cold-hearted man going among his struggling neighbors menaced by famine and extorting money from them, and the cold sweat came out upon his brow. He would not sell his wheat to this man!

The next Sabbath morning, dressed in his best, Macalpin took his stand early by the gate of the little kirk on the hillside, and as each fellow churchman and neighbor passed he whispered to him: "You can get seed grain at my place, measure for measure. For each bushel you take at seed time you can bring me a bushel after harvest."

After doing that for the members of his own congregation, he sent his sons off to other churches in the neighborhood to make the same offer.

Early the next day a procession of men with bags on their backs, men on horseback, men on oxen, and men in wagons, came in at Macalpin's gate. Not one was denied.

"You're all alike to me today," said Macalpin. "Bushed for bushel it shall be. What you take at seed time restore me bushel for bushel after harvest."

His sons measured out the precious grain and filled the bags and boxes of their

neighbors. For three days the work of distribution went on until every man in the neighborhood was provided with seed grain. The act of the great-souled Macalpin saved the settlement, and the deed is held to this day as a treasured remembrance. —The Youth's Companion.

Judge not, and ye Shall not Be Judged. "Oh, yes, it looked very brave and magnanimous, and all that," said Wilbur; "but Steve knew well enough that people were looking on and that it would take!"

"Do you mean, Wilbur," asked Geraldine, "that that would have been your motive if you had done what Steve did?"

Geraldine had, almost without knowing it, discovered a great truth—that the motives which we ascribe to others are almost always those which would have actuated us in similar circumstances.

The standard by which we measure the character and conduct of others—too often a poor little pocket rule—is, consciously or unconsciously, that of self. It is hard for most people, perhaps for all unless governed by the spirit of divine love, to believe in springs of action purer, loftier, more unselfish than their own.

Let us be careful how we ascribe motives for the acts of others. For, after all, it is largely ourselves that we see in our companions. Nobility has a clear vision for nobility; meanness is swift to discern meanness.—Mary S. Daniels.

Keeping up to the Standard. In his declining years, when his eyesight was beginning to fail, Michael Angelo was in the habit of regularly visiting a sculpture gallery. There was a marble torso—the broken remains of a human figure from the hands of one of the greatest sculptors of the past—before which he would stand long with eyes closed, while he rubbed the tips of his fingers up and down over its surface. In this way he was keeping before his mind the standard toward which he was striving, each time mentally judging his own work by comparing it with that perfect work. And then with that example of perfect beauty fixed in his soul, he would hasten back to his studio, take up his tools, and with renewed purpose and encouragement do his best to attain to a like perfection in his art.

So we need to remain long in quiet thought before the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, which presents to us the sort of Christian which he would have us be, and then go and live our life as nearly as possible in accordance with the standard he has set before us.

In the words chosen for our Golden Text, Jesus bids us be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect. Sometimes we think of these words as setting before us an ideal aim, to which we cannot, of course, attain, but in striving for can come nearer our goal than if we had only a human example before us.

"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," are words of Jesus which tell us that in striving to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, we have only to imitate his Son Jesus.

But the Greek word used in our Golden Text which has been translated "perfect" means complete, and refers to completeness of character, the balanced character from which no Christian grace is omitted. The words of Jesus in our lesson show what all-round goodness he requires. The ordinary kindness shown to friends, a Christian must supplement by kindness to those not his friends—even to enemies. Remember, as Phillips Brooks once said, that "The man who aims at the stars comes nearest to hitting the tree tops." Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Sentence Sermons. God expects great things of you; take care that you do not disappoint him.—Howard Duffield.

"Yes, 'Do no evil,' that is understood.
Now learn the harder, braver rule, 'Do good.'"

"However others act toward thee
Act thou toward them as seemeth right;
And whatsoever others be,
Be thou the child of love and light."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did a lawyer repeat the words of Dt. 6.5 to Jesus, and what did Jesus call them? (Mt. 22.34-40.) 2. What does Dt. 6.6 mean? 3. What purpose did the "frontlets" and the writing fastened to the doorposts and gates serve? 4. Who was Timothy? 5. Who had taught Timothy the Scriptures, as inferred from 2 Tim. 2.5? 6. Why should you read the Bible? 7. How often and when do you read it?

THE CHRISTIAN'S USE OF THE BIBLE

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path. Psalm 119.105

LESSON Deuteronomy 6.4-9;
2 Timothy 3.14-17

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.105

DEUTERONOMY 6.4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

2 TIMOTHY 3.14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. GOD'S UNITY AND UNIQUENESS, Dt. 6.4. This passage, verses 4-9, the Jews call *Shema*, from the first word of verse four in Hebrew, translated *Hear.* The Shema is still recited, together with Dt. 11.13-21 and Num. 15.37-41, as the first act of worship in the Jewish synagogue, and twice a day by every adult male Jew.

Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. This signifies not only the unity but the uniqueness of God. "In the Hebrew manuscripts the last letters of the word 'Hear' and 'one' are written large and spell 'ed,' the Hebrew word for 'witness,' because it was believed that this was a sort of brief creed, in which witness was borne to God and he was challenged to bear witness to the loyal believer." "Where the passage occurs in the Sabbath readings in the Jewish synagogue, the whole congregation repeat the last word, *Achad* (Jehovah), for several minutes together with the loudest vociferations" (Adam Clarke).

"The sense of God's reality is a different experience from belief that God exists. All men believe that natural beauty exists, but some men feel it vividly, rejoice in it heartily, while others are never moved by it at all. A shadowy sense of God's reality is one great danger. We do not disbelieve that God exists, but we often lack a penetrating and convincing consciousness that we are dealing with him and he with us. This is the inner problem of prayer" (H. E. Fosdick).

II. "THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT," Dt. 6.5. And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, that is, with every faculty you possess. These words Jesus calls "the great and first commandment," Mt. 22.38.

"Note that we are not called upon to love God with our heart alone, which stands for our emotional nature; nor with our soul, which represents our individuality; but with our might. We can all command our actions, and can do things by the force of our volition; and if we will only love God thus, putting him first, doing what is right towards him and our fellows, not because we like it, but because we choose to do so, we shall find quite wonderfully that our emotional and heart life will fall in line" (F. B. Meyer).

"Love is a duty which follows naturally as the grateful response to Jehovah for the many undeserved mercies received at his hands. It involves the fear and the service of God. It impels those who are filled with it to the conscientious observance of all God's commands. It thus appears as the most inward and the most comprehensive of all religious duties, and as the chief commandment of all" (Dillman).

III. THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THESE WORDS AND OF TEACHING THEM TO CHILDREN, verses 6-9. These words (verses 4 and 5) shall be upon

thy heart. "As the heart was the seat of the practical intellect, this means to commit them to memory; but with a conscience to do them" (George Adam Smith). Whatever makes so deep an impression upon one that it influences his life is said to be written upon his heart.

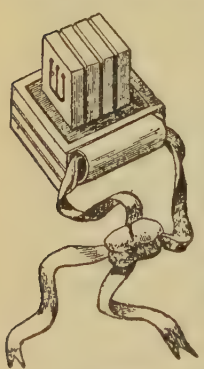
"I would not now exchange for any amount of money the acquaintance with the Bible that was drummed into me when a boy" (Eugene Field).

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. They must be taught to the children, made a matter of conversation at all times, "'pricked' in by repetition and emphasis," or, as Dr. G. A. Smith gives the literal interpretation of the words, "teach them diligently," whet or sharpen; make incisive and impress them on thy children; rub them in.

"Too often we Christian people talk about God to our children only when we open our Bible. Is that as it should be? Nay, verily; we ought to talk to our children about God when we speak of ourselves, and the past, and the happenings of today, when we talk to them of the very problems by which we are confronted in our national and in our personal life. If there were more Godly talk there would be more Godly doing" (G. Campbell Morgan).

"O, if our children all were brought
Betimes to God and duly taught
His Law to honor and obey,
Preëminently blest were they;
And bound as with a sevenfold cord
Would be our nation to the Lord"
(Paraphrase of a Hebrew Midrash).

"From early times the Jews understood the injunction of verse 8 literally; and in the time of our Lord a great importance was attached to three 'memorials,' or visible reminders of this obligation to keep the Law of Jehovah. One was the 'zizith,' or 'fringe,' which was worn on the corners of the outer garment. The others were the 'tephillin' and the 'mezuza,' the use of which was founded on this passage of Deuteronomy. The 'tephillin' were two small boxes, about a cubic inch in size, containing each a piece of parchment on which were written in a special form of handwriting the four passages, Ex. 13.1-10, 11-16; Dt. 6.4-9; 11.13-21. One was fastened inside the left forearm and the other (the phylactery) on the forehead, to be 'a sign upon the head and a frontlet between the eyes.' These were worn at prayer on week days, and sometimes enlarged, as by the Pharisees in our Lord's time, to suggest particular devotion to the Law (Mt. 23.5)."



A Phylactery

This "sign" was worn upon the arm in much the same way as children now tie knots in their handkerchiefs, or change rings on their fingers, to remind them of something they would not forget.

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget" (Kipling).

And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates. "The 'mezuza' was a small oblong box containing the passage Dt. 6.4-9 and was affixed to the right-hand door-post of the house and of each inhabited room, in accordance with this injunction. It had a beautiful significance as a reminder of the presence of God in the house, and the obligation of all the inmates to keep his holy law, but it has also been degraded into a mere charm to keep off evil spirits during the night" (One Volume Commentary).

"Though literalism may press such injunctions to an extreme of formalism, there is something beautiful in giving such prominence to the words of God. How wise the fourfold duty enjoined: to commit them to memory and hide them in the heart that we may not sin against God (Ps. 119.11); to make them the text book for family education and training, and the theme of daily meditation and conversation; and to elevate them into such preëminence that

all our activities shall be ruled by them, and none can enter the house without seeing that there Jehovah is exalted!" (Arthur T. Pierson).

IV. THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF TIMOTHY, 2 Tim. 3.14, 15. "But," Paul counsels his young helper, Timothy, "abide thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of." "Their character had admittedly stood the test of life." "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them"; of Paul himself, verse 10 and 2.2, and of his mother and grandmother, 1.5.

Timothy had known the sacred writings from a babe—he could not remember the time when he had not known them—Paul reminds him, and adds that "they are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It was the Jewish parent's duty to teach his child the Law when in his fifth year. "Through faith which is in Christ Jesus" means "if combined with faith in Christ Jesus" (International Critical Commentary).

"All Christian parents are the divinely appointed priests to their household; they are to have access to God in behalf of their children. If they all recognized their sacred office, by precept, example and prayer, what should hinder the whole host of the children of the church from becoming children of the Kingdom?" (Daniel Steele).

V. THE VALUE OF THE SACRED WRITINGS, 2 Tim. 3.16,17. The reference to Timothy's knowledge of the sacred writings leads Paul to an observation about their values. The translation in the Authorized Version reads, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable"; that of the Revised Version is, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable." The One Volume Commentary finds nothing whatever in the Greek to show which of these renderings is the better. "In this passage the 'scripture' denoted is the Old Testament only, but when the expression is afterward applied to the New Testament (2 Pet. 3.16), it implies that the same characteristics will be found in the New Testament as are here enumerated in reference to the Old," that is, its profitableness for teaching, correction, and training in righteousness. In Romans 15.4, Paul writes: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

What is it that distinguishes the Bible literature from all other literature, and unites its sixty-six books into one incomparable Book? Inspiration and revelation. It contains Scripture inspired of God, revealed to man. The best evidence of the inspiration of the Word of God is found in the Word itself; as J. Hudson Taylor long ago said, when studied, loved, obeyed, and trusted, it never disappoints, never misleads, never fails.

That the man of God—the minister of the Gospel, such as was Timothy—may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. "There is nothing you are going to need along the ever-changing way of life which is overlooked in the counsels of the sacred writings. You need go nowhere else for directions" (J. H. Jowett).

"The more we look upon man the more we feel that he is too good not to be better."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They shall be for frontlets between thine eyes, Dt. 6.8. The Hebrew name "tephillin" means "prayers"; but they were also called in Greek "phylacteries," or "protectors," from their supposed power to ward off evil spirits.—One Volume Commentary.

Thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, verse 9. It was the custom of the ancient Egyptians to inscribe on lintels and doorposts sentences of good omen; but we are not to infer that it was thence derived by the Hebrews, for it was the custom, too, in the Semitic world, and prevails among modern Egyptians, and among the fellahin of Hauran, who in their belief in the magical efficacy of the written word will place the most inappropriate ancient Greek inscriptions (tombstones and the like) above or beside their doors, sometimes upside down!—George Adam Smith.

The orthodox Jew of today has his *mezuza,* a cylindrical tube of glass, metal, or wood, enclosing a parchment on which is written Dt. 6.4-9 and Dt. 11.13-21, fastened on the right-hand side of his door. On the outside of the parchment the

word *Shaddai* (Almighty) is written, and a portion of the tube is cut out so that this word may be plainly seen. "Every pious Jew, as often as he passes the *mezuza,* touches the divine name with the finger of his right hand, then puts the finger to his mouth and kisses it, saying in Hebrew, 'The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and forevermore'; and when leaving on a business expedition he says, after touching it, 'In thy name I go out and shall prosper!'"

Thou shalt write them upon thy gates, Dt. 6.9. This *Shema* was, no doubt, according to ancient ideas, thought to possess magical virtue, and perhaps Christians also need to be reminded that the texts must be carried into life and not merely written on the walls.—W. G. Jordan.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. Who is a Christian? What are some of the virtues required of a Christian? Where can a knowledge of what a Christian should do be found?

The Book of Deuteronomy. In the Greek Version the word *Law* in Dt. 17.18 is *Deuteronomion,* meaning *Second Law,* whence our word *Deuteronomy.* The term suggests a second giving of the Law, or a repetition of the Law, this time to a generation that was not at Sinai. But the book is rather a summary of what was most important for the people to remember, both as regards what God had done for their nation in the past and as regards what they should do in the future. It contains both history and legislation. It has been described as a Great Sermon and a Popular Law Book.

The Background of Deuteronomy 6.4-9. As told in Deuteronomy, it is the close of the long sojourn in the wilderness. The Israelites are encamped on the Plains of Moab, within sight of the Promised Land. Moses is delivering his final charge to the people. In the first discourse, chapters 1-4, he briefly reviews the history from Mount Sinai to the Jordan, reminding them of God's goodness to them throughout all that time, appealing to them to keep his commandments. In the second of three discourses, chapters 5-28, he repeats the Decalogue (chap. 5), and then in chapters 6-11 exhorts the people to obedience.

A commentator says of the verses selected for our lesson that they constitute one of the most important passages in the Book of Deuteronomy and in the whole range of Hebrew literature. "Whilst verse four cannot be claimed as a final declaration of absolute monotheism, it looks steadily and moves energetically in that direction."

Second Timothy. It was when Paul was a prisoner at Rome and conscious that the end was near that he wrote his second letter to Timothy, his young disciple and friend, who was then, it is believed, in a position of authority at Ephesus. Timothy was the son of a Christian Jewess named Eunice (2 Tim. 1.5).

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Psalm 19.7-14; Luke 24.44-47; John 5.39, 40.

As Gladstone said, the Sunday-school is the world's greatest institution for popularizing the world's greatest Book. Do your pupils know the Bible? Do they know how to study the Bible? Are you teaching them how to study it? Are you leading them to love the Word of God?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO GET HELP FROM THE BIBLE

Beginning the Lesson. Montefiore says of our first passage: "It has been for many ages the first bit of the Bible which Jewish children have learned to say and to read, just as it has for many ages formed the confession of faith among all members of the brotherhood of Judaism." What are its exhortations?

What We Should Bring to our Study of the Bible. We get from the Bible, just as we get from any other book, that which we seek, and that depends upon the attitude of mind in which we approach it. When we read a scientific book, consult a dictionary or an encyclopedia, read a novel or poem, we go with mind alert, quickened, desirous of finding beauty, truth, and helpfulness; we read for

information, or to please the taste, or to quicken the intellect, or to rest and help the mind. All these purposes may be met by a proper reading of the Bible, but we too often approach it with mind inert, dead, indifferent, inattentive, not caring for its truth or its beauty.—W. T. Roark.

Devotional Study of the Bible. Dr. John R. Mott spoke at Northfield on Devotional Bible Study as the Secret that Underlies the Life of Power. Here are some of his helpful words:—

Bible study alone shows us ourselves as we really are, and, therefore, as God sees us. Would we be Christians of more than ordinary spiritual power? Then we must be great feeders upon the word which is not only quick but powerful. To have power with God we must give ourselves to this study. Other helps to spirituality without devotional Bible study may become dangerous. The habit of meditation, for example, without the Bible is likely to lead a man to become morbid and melancholy, whereas conducted with the aid of the Bible it is a most healthful process. Secret prayer, moreover, is practically impossible without Bible study, because real prayer is not monologue but dialogue. It requires two to have communion. We must give God an opportunity to speak to us as well as we to him. The reason why some do not study the Bible devotionally is because they have no suitable course of study to follow. The first suggested course would be the study of the more devotional books of the Bible. The study of biography has always proved stimulating to spiritual life. The topical study of the Bible is also very fruitful. Mr. Moody used to urge every year the importance of devoting at least one month of Bible study to each of the great doctrines; for example, sin, the atonement, etc. The last course of study, and by far the most important, is the study of Jesus Christ.

A Wrong and a Right Use of the Bible. When John Wesley had to decide whether he would go down to Ipswich to preach, he stuck a pin between the leaves of his Bible and took the first text that struck his eye. If it read, "So he (Jonah) paid the fare thereof and went down," then Wesley paid his fare and went down to Ipswich. If it read, "Let him that is on the housetop not go down, etc.," then Wesley went not down to Ipswich. If he found nothing so pertinent to his perplexity as either of these passages, he twisted what he did find into some pertinency by a mystical or symbolical interpretation; or else he tried again.

But Wesley made another use of his Bible. With it he brought sinners to repentance and turned them from the "broad way that leadeth to destruction" into the paths of righteousness and peace. With it he comforted the sorrowing by means of "the comfort wherewith he himself also had been comforted of God." With it he illuminated the darkness of the perplexed and showed unto them straight paths for their wandering feet. With it he "raised them that were dead in trespasses and sins into newness of life."

So John Wesley had two Bibles. One was a diviner's rod, a magician's rod, an alchemist's touchstone, a Delphic oracle. The other was "the sword of the spirit," "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his pathway."

Our grandfathers and particularly our grandmothers cherished both these Bibles. Indeed, they did not distinguish between them. Now we have lost one of them, at least all of us who think have.

The first I may call the "heathen Bible," because it embodies heathen ideas of revelation and inspiration.

The second I may call the "scriptural Bible," because it is the Bible to which the Scriptures themselves bear unwavering witness; and above all the "Christian Bible," because it is the Bible which Christ used.—Charles D. Williams, in The American Magazine.

Four Ways in which to Know the Bible. The first is to be acquainted with its beauty spots, and this, of course, is the way in which the great majority of people know the Book. Some of the choicest narratives in the Old Testament, notably the matchless stories of Joseph, a few of the greatest Psalms, select samples of the resonant eloquence of Isaiah, a few of the parables of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount, some of Paul's supreme passages, especially the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians—such is the Bible which most people know. Read Cromwell's letters and you get a fair idea of the way our fathers knew the Scripture. They knew it all.

The second way to know the Bible is to know its individual books. Many a man has vainly struggled to find interest and sense in some sections of the Scripture, like

a collection of prophetic sermons in the Old Testament or an epistle in the New, and then, discovering what the book really is about, what kind of man wrote it, when he wrote it, why he wrote it, to whom he wrote it, has seen the light break until what was dull and opaque became luminous and clear. To read the books of the Bible without thus knowing their vivid settings is like listening to one-half of a telephone conversation.

A third way to know the Bible is to know its characters. For the Bible is biography, and he who would understand its meaning must familiarly acquaint himself with the men and women who throng its pages and illustrate its truths. Its men and women must be real people in his imagination and his affection. He must come up to what the Bible says by way of the lives through whom the Bible says it, until Amos the shepherd of Tekoa, or Hosea of the ruined house and broken heart, Peter the vacillating changed to rock, or Paul of the indwelling Christ and the unconquerable passion for Christ, are his familiar friends.

But indispensable as are these three ways of knowing the Book; all of them together are not enough. Only as a man is able to trace up through the whole Scriptures the development of the structural ideas does he really know the Bible.

To start with God conceived like a man who walks in the garden in the cool of the day, or as one who comes down from the sky to confuse men's speech lest they should build their tower so high as to reach his home; to know the road that leads out from the beginning until in the New Testament God revealed in Christ as the spiritual Presence in whom we live and move and have our being, whose name is love, and whose temples are human hearts; and to be able in any book or passage to locate oneself with reference to this progressive revelation of the meaning of God—that is to know the Bible.

Not only can we believe that the Bible does represent a progressive revelation, but we can clearly and in detail watch it progress. We can know where the Scripture's major ideas started; we can trace the routes they took; we can watch them in periods of rapid traveling and in days when the going was difficult and slow. We can enter into their defeats, their hair-breadth escapes, and costly victories; and we can see the way the gospel of Jesus carried them up to a great height "not to destroy but to fulfil."—Condensed from an Address by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Historical Study of the Bible. The great essential to any genuine interpretation of the Scriptures is to regard them as a historic unfolding. They are the record of the progressive growth of the divine thought in Israel's thinking, of the gradual revelation of the divine life in Israel's living.

The history of a thing is the thing. The book of Mormon professes to have no history. It professes to have been miraculously engraved on plates of gold. It can be obeyed, but it cannot be understood. The Koran is alleged to have been divinely dictated to an amanuensis, and its divinity is supposed to consist in exemption from the historic process. But the Bible emphasizes the historical process, the lives of heroes, sages, poets, kings and prophets, the development of natural tendencies and ideals which Jesus symbolizes under the figure of the growth of seed—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Instead of being a collection of statements or a series of propositions, the Bible is a history of persons, nations, movements, in and through which the character of God is revealed to men. Its message is entangled in events.

Evidently fruitful is the conception of the Bible which sees in it the result of an unfolding process. As we study the development of Israel's conception of righteousness, of prayer, of ritual, of immortality, of God, we are coming ourselves into the possession of the truth as in no other way.

Suppose that I wished to convey to some friend in Europe an idea of the significance of the life and death of Abraham Lincoln. I might instruct a printer to collect four biographies of Lincoln written by those who knew his history. Then I might select some history of the reconstructive period by a competent scholar. Then I might select a group of important letters from members of Lincoln's cabinet or their friends. Finally selecting some great poem, like the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," I might direct the printer to bind all this literature into one volume. But my friend in Europe must clearly understand that the various parts of the volume are not by one writer. If he reads the letters written after the Battle of Gettysburg as if they were written after the assassination of Lincoln, or attributes the sentiments of Wilkes Booth to Secretary Stanton, he will have only a distorted conception of Lincoln and his imprint on America.

So in the New Testament we have four lives of our Lord, written by those in closest touch with the inner circle of his friends. Then we have in the Book of The Acts the religious reconstruction, outlined by Luke the physician. Then follows a remarkable correspondence, holding up the mirror to the life of the early church. And at the end we have the great prose poem of the Apocalypse. But to make no distinction between the utterance of Christ and of Paul, to confuse Simon Peter with Simon Magus, or to suppose that the allegory of Hagar and Ishmael has the moral value of the Sermon on the Mount, is to lose all proportion and perspective, and remain a stranger to the impulses which produced our New Testament and made it dynamic in the history of the world.—Condensed from The Educational Ideal in the Ministry, by Dr. W. H. P. Faunce.

A Good Method of Studying the Bible. That method may be indicated by three words,—read, examine, meditate.

In order to read, let all merely mechanical arrangements be set on one side. By mechanical arrangements is meant all those methods which approach the Bible from the standpoint of having to read it as a duty. For instance, there are those who attempt to read the whole Book through every year. I have met many who have read a portion allotted, from a sense of duty, who, ten minutes after the reading, were unable to give any clear account of what they had read. It is far better to read one verse so as to discover its light and hear the music of spiritual intention breathing through it, than to read a set portion, and yet know nothing of its spiritual teaching.

Take a book, and read it through at a sitting. This may seem a large order, and I think I hear some one say that their usual portion has been about twelve verses a day. Yes, and, if all the truth is told, they should add that, when the twelve verses have been read they have taken up another book and read some hundreds of its pages. Leave the other book for a while, and give the Word of God the same opportunity. This reading through of a book will enable you to form some idea of its general scope. Even this will hardly be obtained in one reading. I have personally found it of enormous advantage to read aloud. It is so easy, when reading silently, for the mind to wander upon a side issue. Reading aloud is a great aid to concentration of thought.

Having read the book through, lay the Bible down, and attempt to remember the thoughts impressed on your mind. Write these thoughts at as great length as possible. First impressions may not be accurate, but, as the work proceeds, the mistakes will be discovered and corrected. And such reading is of infinite value. Having thus discovered something of the purpose of a book, read it again, more slowly, endeavoring to get at its scheme. Let this process be repeated until the general outline of the book is stamped upon the memory.

Now follows a most important subject.—that of meditation. Here we are in great danger of failing. There are many who read a set portion, and give themselves to the examination of words, and then imagine that they have done all that is necessary. It is a great mistake. After the reading and examination, let time be taken to meditate upon the truth discovered. Apply the teaching to your own character and conduct. Ask whether conduct is in harmony with the divine thought. Apply the truth to the affairs of men and to the government of nations, and thus discover your proper attitude as to personal life, and as to service for God.

The Book is to be read in order to discover the will of God. The will of God is to be discovered in order that it may be obeyed. The supreme glory of the Scriptures lies in their power to create character. The study of them is a means to an end. The method of studying I have suggested will not enable any one to satisfy an ambition to be known as a Bible student, but it will give a knowledge of the Scriptures "which are able to make . . . wise unto salvation."—Condensed from an Address by G. Campbell Morgan.

For Discussion. 1. Religious education in the home. See Religious Education, December, 1919.

2. The historical study of the Bible. See Chapter III of The Educational Ideal in the Ministry, by W. H. P. Faunce.

3. The Pocket Testament League.

4. It is the great destiny of England and America to carry the Bible to the earth's remotest bounds.—Joseph H. Choate.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Do you ask God to hasten the coming of his Kingdom, and then fail to do anything towards bringing the gospel to others? 2. Do you pray "Thy will be done," and then think only about getting your own will? 3. What is the next thing we ought to work for in order to help get God's will done in our city as it is done in heaven? 4. Do you pray for our daily bread and then worry about our bread for next year? 5. Do you ask to be forgiven as you forgive, and then cherish hatred of others? 6. Since God knows what we need before we ask (Mt. 6.8), why should we make known to him our wants? 7. How can prayer be made most effective? 8. What is your time each day for prayer?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO READ AND STUDY THE BIBLE

Beginning the Lesson. When John Wanamaker, the merchant prince, was eleven years old he purchased a Bible. In later years he said of this purchase: "I have, of course, made large purchases of property in my time, involving millions of dollars. But it was as a boy in the country, at the age of eleven years, that I made my greatest purchase. In the little mission Sunday-school I bought from my teacher a small red leather Bible, about eight inches long and six inches wide. That Bible cost two dollars and seventy-five cents, which I paid for in small instalments as I earned the money. Looking back over my life, I see that that little red Book was the foundation on which my life has been built, and has made possible all that has counted in my life. I know now that it was the greatest investment and the most important and far-reaching purchase I ever made."

You have a Bible. Was it given to you, or did you buy it? Do you value it as Mr. Wanamaker valued his? What is our general topic today? The Christian's Use of the Bible. And for our text we have two passages, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. Where is the first passage found? Did the Israelites in Old Testament times have our Bible? What did they have? Who wrote the second passage of our lesson? To whom? Did Timothy have our Bible? What "sacred writings" did he have? How did Moses wish the Israelites of old to treasure God's words? How did Paul wish Timothy to value the sacred writings which he knew?

General Grant's Message to the Children of the United States. General Grant was president of the United States when the centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence was held. At that time he was asked for a message for the children of the land, and his words, which have become famous, were these: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of our liberties. Write its precepts upon your hearts and practice them in your lives. To its influence we are indebted for the progress we have made in true civilization, and to this we must look as the guide in the future."

A Parable of the Unread Bible. One day a man who had been roaming about in a park for hours stopped to speak to the owner. "What a fine view you have from the top of the hill yonder!"

"Yes," answered he; "on a clear day you can see Mont Blanc and the Rhine from there."

The stranger laughed. "Not quite so far as that, but the view is very extensive and beautiful."

"You impudent fellow!" exclaimed the owner, "do you mean to contradict me? I tell you, Mont Blanc and the Rhine are quite visible."

"Have you seen them?" inquired the visitor.

"No," said he, "I have never been up the hill in my life, but it has been a saying of my ancestors for hundreds of years."

"Why not go to see for yourself?" asked the stranger.

"I couldn't do it," replied the owner. "There's so much undergrowth to get through, and the hill is steep and stony; but I am sure that the prospect is as I have said."

I think I need not say more to prove that this nobleman was eccentric. We might perhaps say that he was foolish. To own a good estate and not to enjoy it, to be proud and boastful about it and yet to be ignorant of its real beauties and usefulness, to fancy it contained things which it did not contain, to be so lazy as never to explore it, to brag of its fruit and yet to be content with just so much of it as chance visitors brought to him: all this was silly, and worse than silly.

But what has it to do with you? It is a parable of the Unread Bible.

To compare the Bible to a fine park is a very modest comparison indeed. The usefulness and the delight which are to be had by a real, thorough knowledge of the Bible are quite beyond my power to describe, but there are many people who are content to depend on what preachers and others tell them and will not take the trouble to look into it for themselves. They get poor food for their souls when they might have the best. They imagine that the Bible is dry, or that it is very mysterious and difficult. They declare that it is the divinest book in the world, but they won't read and study it for themselves. They fancy there are things in it which are not there, and they don't know the things which are there. They are as odd as the nobleman.—Condensed from The Wonderful River, by John A. Hamilton.

Do You Read the Bible? In a Christian home a mother asked her son, a member of a church, where his Bible was. "I don't know, mother," he replied, "but I guess it is in my trunk upstairs." Then the mother turned to her daughter and said, "And where is yours, Mary?"

"Well, really, mother," the daughter replied with embarrassment, "I can't tell you; I think, though, it must be on one of my shelves."

In the highest part of Hong Kong during three months of the year a damp fog settles and deposits a blue mold over everything that is not used daily. Would there be a blue mold on your Bible if you lived there?

You may read a chapter or more morning and evening for many years, and yet the reading may have little value because your mind is not upon what you read. If your object is merely to cover a certain amount of ground, you are not reading aright. Read less and think about what you read. Ask questions about what you do not understand. Weigh the words. Think them over. Learn their message for you.

How Ruskin Learned the Scriptures. Ruskin's mother loved the Bible and it was evidently her resolve that for her son it should be a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. She chose twenty-six chapters of the Book for him to learn by heart. These are the ones: Ex. 15, 20; 2 Sam. 1.17 to end; 1 K. 8; Psalms 23, 32, 90, 91, 103, 112, 119, 139; Prov. 2, 3, 8, 12; Isa. 58; Mt. 5, 6, 7; Acts 26; 1 Cor. 13, 15; Jas. 4; Rev. 5, 6. These chapters give the song of Moses after the crossing of the Red Sea; the Ten Commandments; the lament of David over Saul and Jonathan; the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple; the Shepherd Psalm; the Thirty-second Psalm with its lessons about forgiveness and reliance upon divine guidance; the Ninetieth Psalm, with its lessons of divine providences; the comforting Ninety-first Psalm; the thanksgiving One hundred and third Psalm, the One hundred and twelfth Psalm, showing the profitableness of godliness; the One hundred and nineteenth Psalm, laden with prayer and promise; the One hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm with its prayer of heart-searching; four chapters in Proverbs with their exhortations to virtue and their wise precepts; the Fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, which rebukes hyprocrisy; the Sermon on the Mount; the story of Paul's conversion; Paul's great chapters on love and on immortality; the words of James against pride, covetousness and other sins; and two chapters in Revelation.

Sentence Sermons. I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.—The Psalmist.

Young man, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures.—Benjamin Franklin.

The Bible is the best gift God has given to man.—Lincoln.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did Jesus continue long in prayer? (Lk. 6.12.) 2. In Lk. 11.11-13, how does Jesus illustrate God's willingness to answer prayer? 3. What parables show that Jesus approved of persevering prayer? (Lk. 11.5-9; 18.1-8.) 4. What name is given to Chapters five and six of Matthew? 5. How may God's name be hallowed? 6. What does the petition "Thy Kingdom come" mean? 7. What are our debts to God for which we need forgiveness? 8. For what does the Lord's Prayer teach us to pray? 9. May there be a great difference between saying one's prayers and really praying?

PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matthew 7.7

LESSON Mark 1.35; 14.32-36; Matthew 6.9-13

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 63.1-8

MARK 1.35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

MARK 14.32 And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. 34 And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt.

MATTHEW 6.9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE HABIT OF PRAYER, Mk. 1.35. To gain strength for his days of strenuous work Jesus was in the habit of going off early in the morning to a quiet spot—a deserted place, where there were no people—and pray. He began the day with God. Alone in communion with his Father his strength was renewed and his problems were clarified, for there he learned his Father's will. Do we wonder that he should need to pray? "Remember the tendency of life, the tendency of even the best life, to run down. Nobody knew this as well as Jesus did. See what he said about it. See chiefly what he did about it. He did not pray just to set an example. He lived the life of prayer because for him it was worth living" (William Fraser McDowell).

"Much prayer means much power; little prayer means little power; no prayer means no power" (J. Stuart Holden).

II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH ALL TRUE PRAYER MUST BE OFFERED, 14.32-36. When Jesus and his eleven disciples reached the Garden of Gethsemane he said to eight of them, "Sit ye here, while I pray," and then went farther on in the garden with Peter, James and John who were to watch with him. It was a bitter hour. The end of his ministry was at hand. The traitor was coming to betray him to his enemies. He began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled. How truly human was our divine Saviour!

"We are often inclined to think that he was never perplexed, never in doubt about the future, never uncertain about his Father's will and purpose. Our perplexities are among our greatest tribulations. We are amazed at the presence of evil in the world, at the sufferings of good people, at the enormous waste of life. It is comforting to us to know that in such matters, too, our Lord was tempted in all points like as we are" (Francis E. Clark).

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," Jesus cried; My sorrow is more than I can bear; it is killing to me. There are those who say it was untrue to nature for Jesus to be so calm at the Last Supper, as John portrays him in John 14, and so distressed in Gethsemane. It is their psychology which is at fault. R. C. Gillie counsels such to study brave motherhood, sunny and calm in the presence of little children, but harrowed by deep anxieties in the solitude of the night. He had held back with iron hand the tide of his prevision of coming suffering, until the last word of instruction and of consolation and warning had been spoken. Now he was free to face the blackest facts. He had to face them.

"Abide ye here, and watch," Jesus said to the three, and then went a distance of a stone's cast into the dark shadows. Jesus craved companionship. He wanted his three favorite disciples awake and within call. But they failed him.

"We do not go beyond the truth if we believe that he still leans upon men in his effort to redeem the world, and if they fail him, his work will fail" (James A. Beebe).

Going forward a little, Jesus fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. A little later Jesus said to the chief priests, captains and elders who had come to seize him, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Lk. 22.53).

"Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee," Jesus cried. In the Greek the words are *Abba, Pater,* the first the Aramaic word and the second the Greek word for our word *Father.* In his deep distress Jesus began his prayer with the word from his mother-tongue which he had learned in his early home at Nazareth. The use of the two words having the same meaning have the same force and earnestness as the repetition of words of the same meaning in "Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord," and in "Amen, so let it be."

"All things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me," Jesus prayed in that dark hour in Gethsemane. The "cup" referred to his death on the cross and all that it would mean to him. His prayer was not granted; the cup was not removed; he drank it to the dregs. And yet we complain because we ask for fair weather and it rains, for a successful venture and it proves unsuccessful, for wealth and it is unattainable! What a flood of light this ungranted petition of Jesus throws upon our understanding of answered prayers! "Howbeit, not what I will, but what thou wilt," were the words which Jesus coupled with his prayer that the cup might pass from him. His Father's will was done. It was not the Father's will that he should be spared the cup of suffering, but it was his Father's will that he should be given courage and strength to drink the cup.

Petition must be coupled with submission. "To pray is to desire—but to desire what God would have us desire," Fénelon has truly said. "'Thy will be done' is the keynote to which every prayer must be tuned."

III. FOR WHAT TO PRAY, Mt. 6.9-13. The Model Prayer naturally divides into two parts: first, the things of God; second, the things of man. Foremost in the mind of Jesus were always the things of God, and the first three petitions put God first, they refer to him, his kingdom, his will.

"After this manner therefore pray ye," thus the prayer is prefaced in Matthew's Gospel. This does not mean that the prayer which follows is the only prayer we should offer. Rather does it counsel us to let our prayers be constituted like this Model Prayer, to let them deal with divine and human interests, with spiritual and physical wants. It reminds us of many things which we are prone to forget when we commune with God. Too many think of prayer as petition for personal needs or desires, whereas this prayer is for others as well as for self, and is concerned chiefly with God's interests and our spiritual needs.

The Westminster Confession states that the chief end of man's life is "to glorify God." So Jesus teaches by his prayer that before the thought of self must come the thought of God.

"Our Father," thus the prayer begins. In a reading book used in a boys' school at Damascus conducted by Moslems a version of the Lord's Prayer begins, "Our God." To the Moslem, God is a far-off God, and to think of him as Father would be to dishonor him. To the Christian, God is Spirit but Jesus has taught him to give God this sacred human name of Father, and to think of him in this beautiful human relationship, though God is infinite in wisdom, goodness and power. Jesus himself always addressed God as Father. He is never so addressed in the Old Testament. "It is a very good name for God," as little Joe says in Bleak House.

"Prayer is communion with God, not as the Supreme Governor who controls the universe, but as the Father who advises, strengthens, and forgives his children in answer to their cry of need, who enables them to bear the temptations of success and failure, and lightens darkness when the clouds hang heavy overhead" (Kirsopp Lake).

"Our Father, who art in heaven." "Why do we say 'who art in heaven' when God is everywhere?" a teacher asked, and a small lad answered, "Because it's headquarters." "This is more, shall I say, than God's postal address. This little phrase tells us what kind of Father we have. I do not think it at all fanciful to say with Dr. Stanford, that, as Heaven is the place of perfection, 'Our Father, who art in

Heaven' may be interpreted to mean, 'Our Father, who is the one perfect Father.' 'Heaven' is spoken of in the Bible as the place of dominion and authority. 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens,' says the Psalmist 'and his Kingdom ruleth over all.' Our Father is in the place of supreme dominion, love rules the universe" (J. D. Jones).

Cloister of the Pater Noster Church, Mount of Olives
It has the Lord's Prayer inscribed in thirty-two languages

"Hallowed be thy name." The name of God stands for God himself, his revealed Nature. *Hallowed* means *treated as holy,* reverenced, rightly worshiped. In this petition we pray that we may honor the name of the Father in thought and life.

There are many ways in which we may fail to hallow God's name. Swearing is profaning God. Irreverent worship is profaning him. Harboring unworthy ideas of his Nature, thinking him cruel, unkind, is profaning him. "We treat God with irreverence when we banish him from our thoughts," says Ruskin, "by not referring to his will on slight occasions; there is nothing so small that we may not honor God by asking his guidance of it." Deeds profane the name of God more than words can.

"Thy Kingdom come." Let thy sovereignty be realized. It will be realized when the words of the next petition become true: when every one's will is in as perfect accord with God's will as was the will of Jesus, then God's Kingdom will be established on earth as in heaven. "In our unspiritual way of thinking we are apt to fancy that the coming of God's kingdom would be some sort of spectacular manifestation in the heavens above and the earth beneath, with all manner of scenic glories for the delight of wonder-loving minds, and with complete cessation of all need of labor. But such a performance would be unworthy of God and damaging to me. The real coming of the Kingdom would mean that men were loving God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves" (Borden P. Bowne).

Do not forget Ruskin's words: "If you do not wish his Kingdom to come, don't pray for it; but if you do wish for it, you must do more than pray for it—you must work for it."

"Empires, temples, scepters, thrones—
May they all for God be won!
And, in every human heart,
Father, let thy kingdom come!" (John Page Hopps).

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." This is a prayer that our wills may conform to God's will. Too often we pray that he will approve of our way. "I am sure I shall receive either what I ask for or what I should ask," said Bishop Hall. It is a prayer of consecration, not of resignation. Augustine amplifies the thought: "O Lord, grant that I may never seek to bind the straight to the crooked, that is, thy will to mine; but that I may ever bind the crooked to straight, that is, my will to thine; that thy will may be done and thy kingdom come."

Are we doing our part to make it possible that God's will shall be done throughout the earth? "Do we believe," questions Dr. Aked, "that it is God's will that men should drink themselves drunk, be riotous, murderers, and abominable? Do you believe that it is God's will that mobs should pour coal oil over a writhing fellow creature, white or black, and roast him at the stake? Do you believe that it is God's will that, as declared by an American judge, corruption should be found ingrained in American public life and a large per cent of municipal expenditure should be graft?"

The last three petitions refer to our needs, our sins, our temptations. The plural is used throughout. The pronouns are our, us, we; never my, me, I. Prayer must not be selfish. It should include others.

"Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share" (Whittier).

"Give us this day our daily bread." By this petition Jesus taught that we may bring to our Father all our wants, and not ours alone, but those of others. In this petition we ask for a supply sufficient for this day's need; the petition precludes anxious thought for the morrow. It asks also for a supply for our brother's need, and implies that we will help supply that need.

"I thank thee, Lord, for strength of arm
To win my bread,
And that beyond my need is meat
For friend unfed.
I thank thee much for bread to live;
I thank thee more for bread to give."

"And forgive us our debts." *Debts* here means *sins:* a debt not paid to God is a sin.

"At vesper tide,
One virtuous and pure in heart did pray,
'Since none I wronged in deed or word today,
From whom should I crave pardon?
Master, say.'"

A voice replied:

"From the sad child whose joy thou hast not planned,
The goaded beast whose friend thou didst not stand;
The rose that died for water from thy hand!"

"Forgive us our sins. Sin is also a thing we share in common. We are involved in one another's sins, not only, as is often obvious, in their consequences, but even, if we look a little deeper, in the responsibility for them. Our lives are all interdependent, interlocked. We must take our share of responsibility and of blame for sins and crimes which are traceable, in part at least, to social complications and injustices, between man and man or class and class or nation and nation, for in these we are all sharers. Such sins are 'our sin.' Indeed, how much of the whole social order in which we live and in which our consciences so easily acquiesce is but one vast sin against God and against man" (P. Carnegie Simpson).

"As we also have forgiven our debtors." Must God wait to be good until we are good? Is our grace the measure of his own? No; but until we have the spirit which forgives we have not the spirit which can be forgiven. If it were possible for us to receive love from God and give out hate to men; if we could be jovous toward him and sullen toward our neighbors; if we could accept from him sunshine, tenderness, and love while we radiate annoyance, hostility and disdain toward our fellow men, then we might receive forgiveness and be unforgiving. "It is not because the Father will shut his heart up against us if we shut up our hearts against one another. It is because forgiveness of sin is deliverance from sin, and the unforgiving soul is not willing to be delivered from its relentless hatred" (Lyman Abbott).

When Livingstone was asked how he could treat the treachery and villainy of African natives and Arab traders with such infinite patience and extraordinary calm, he quietly remarked, "I have faults myself!"

"And bring us not into temptation." God does not lead us into temptation, but he permits us to be brought into temptation. Temptation has here its earlier meaning of a testing, trying, as has the root word still in our word *attempt*. The thought is that God has so ordered this world that we are brought into circumstances which try our characters, put us to the test.

Jesus followed his Beatitude concerning the persecuted with these words: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake." And James wrote: "Count it all joy

when ye fall into manifold trials." Why, then, are we taught to pray to be spared these trials, these times of testing? "It is a prayer of conscious weakness" answers Dr. Aked. "It is as though we should cry: 'Our Father, we count not ourselves amongst the great and heroic of thy children. We dread the fiery trial. We doubt our power of resistance. Let us not be tried beyond our strength to withstand. Bring us not into the storm of conflict that may overwhelm us nor the fiery trial which may destroy our faith.'" In this petition we ask to be spared testings that would be too hard, to be saved from trials which we cannot stand, and express our trust that when assailed by temptations God will give us strength to withstand them. "Directly contrary to the spirit of this prayer is the temper which led Peter into great temptation and through that great temptation into flagrant sin."

"Are you in danger? Tell your Lord. Are you tempted? Tell him. Did you slip by the way and grieve him? Tell him. Never wait for the evening hour for confession and absolution. Absolution waits for your confession; make it immediately, wherever you are, in the train, in the office, on the street, amid the busy rush of the busy day, express your need in prayer. Practice the presence of God and speak to him under stress and strain at every point whenever you feel you are burdened or in need" (G. C. Morgan).

"But deliver us from the evil one." The Authorized Version reads *evil,* not *evil one.* The Greek words *tou ponerou* may be either masculine or neuter, and may therefore be translated either *the evil one* (masculine) or *the evil* (neuter). Orientals think of evil as personified, hence the Revisers have preferred "the evil one." We naturally think of evil in the abstract, hence "the evil" (not "evil") would seem the preferable rendering.

"What is the value of prayer conceived as petition? It is practically and psychologically necessary for developing and expressing our sense of dependence on God, and this is one of the essential factors of religion. As the religious life grows, we may change the nature of our petitions. We may pass from particular requests to more inclusive spiritual prayer; but in general petition will always remain an element of our human prayers" (Borden P. Bowne).

The doxology, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen" (Authorized Version), a repetition at the end, of the thought at the beginning, is an appropriate conclusion of the prayer. It has been made sacred by long usage, and therefore may well be retained. It is rightly omitted, however, from the Revised Version because it is not found in the most authoritative manuscripts, and was not known to the earliest Christian writers. It was seemingly incorporated with the prayer in public worship and then written on the margin of some manuscript, whence it was taken over into the text by a later copyist.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

After this manner therefore pray ye, Mt. 6.9. Every Jew was required to recite daily eighteen set prayers of considerable length, or, if hindred by press of business, a summary of them. The rabbis also taught their pupils an additional form of prayer composed by themselves, to be added to these eighteen prayers. Our Lord's disciples would therefore understand that they were to recite the Lord's Prayer every day at the end of their ordinary prayers. That this was done there can be little doubt, for The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, which probably dates from the first century A. D., directs the Lord's Prayer to be said three times a day by all Christians.

Our Lord's followers would further regard the prayer as the badge of discipleship, something intended to distinguish the disciples of Jesus from all other men. So zealously was its secret guarded in early times, that, like the Creed, it was only taught to catechumens just before their baptism, and was never used in those portions of public worship to which the heathen were admitted. It was always used at Holy Communion, where it formed the conclusion of the canon or prayer of consecration.—One Volume Commentary.

Abba, Mk. 14.36. "This word was used as a token of filial affection: it was suggestive of confiding love and intimate fellowship. Servants or slaves were not allowed to use it when speaking to the head of the family; it belonged to the children alone."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who is a Christian? What should a Christian be according to our Golden Text of two weeks ago? How may a Christian gain help from the Bible? What part does the Bible have in your life?

The Background of Mark 1.35. Jesus had left Nazareth and made Capernaum, a city on the Sea of Galilee, his headquarters. There he was beset by eager crowds who wished to hear his words, for the common people heard him gladly, or to be healed, for his power as a Physician had become known far and wide. All this made great demands upon his strength and sympathy. How he prepared for such days of strain the words of Mk. 1.35 tell.

The Background of Mark 14.32-36. It was the last night that Jesus spent on earth. With his disciples he had left the upper room where they had partaken of the Last Supper and crossed the brook Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane at the base of the Mount of Olives. There he agonized in prayer, seeking to know his Father's will for him and to gain from his Father help and strength to fulfil it.

The Background of Matthew 6.9-13. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." are the words with which Matthew closes his report of Jesus's words about right standards of living, our lesson two weeks ago. The citizens of the new kingdom must excel the scribes and Pharisees in righteousness. Jesus next spoke about three forms of righteousness—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. He emphasized the fact that they are transactions between man and his heavenly Father, and into them no thought of what others may say or think should enter. Our passage from this section of Matthew is the Model Prayer.

Luke tells us that once when Jesus had been praying his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray." In answer Jesus gave them the prayer to which we have given his name, the Lord's Prayer. Either Jesus gave this prayer on two different occasions, or Matthew placed it earlier, inserting it in the Sermon on the Mount in order to give a comprehensive view of what Jesus taught about prayer.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Mt. 7.7-11; 18.19, 20; Lk. 18.1-14; 1 Jn. 5.14, 15.

Matthew 7.7-11 bids us pray and expect an answer to our prayer. Earthly fathers give good gifts to their children; how much more will the Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him? Our Golden Text bids us ask, and promises that it shall be given. In Intermediate and Senior groups many teachers will find by questioning their pupils that they think of prayer as a means of getting things, and lose their faith in prayer because what they prayed for is not granted. Make clear to them today that petitions must be in accord with God's will, and that ungranted petitions are often God's best answer to their prayers. The words of Jesus in Gethsemane prove this. The words of 1 Jn. 5.14, 15 teach what sort of asking receives. Let them see in the Model Prayer of what petitions Jesus most approves.

Let no pupil leave your class today without a clearer understanding of the spirit of the Lord's Prayer, a better knowledge of the meaning of each petition.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus had the habit of prayer. Often are we told of his going off to hold communion with his Father. "If the hill back of Nazareth could give back its secret," Dr. John R. Mott well says, "if the Lake of Galilee could tell what it witnessed, if the desert places round about Jerusalem could tell their story, if the Mount of Olives could speak out and tell what transpired there, they would all tell us, more than anything else, of the prayer life of our Lord. They would reveal its intensity, its unselfishness, its constancy, its godly fear, that made it irresistible."

What is prayer? What are some of the prevalent misconceptions about prayer? What are some of the teachings of Jesus in regard to prayer? What lessons about prayer do we learn from the prayer-life of Jesus? What part has prayer in the Christian life?

Some Misconceptions about Prayer. The lowest and crudest notion concerning prayer is that it consists in asking God for things; and that its value consists in getting the things for which we ask. This is the notion with which childhood always begins, and the only one which childhood can entertain. This notion is also prominent in popular religious thought, and underlies much of what is said concerning answer to prayer. This view is very superficial, and is the parent of much skepticism respecting prayer. It is no uncommon thing to find young persons skeptical with respect to prayer, because they have failed to get the things for which they have prayed; and often the faith of older persons breaks down from the same cause. In the stress of some trial they have faithfully prayed, and no answer has come. Friends or relatives have died, or their own health has failed, or their way has been hedged in; and all the while Heaven has seemed as deaf to their cries and entreaties as the ear of the dead; and they have been left to sorrow and uncertainty and bereavement and manifold distress. Such cases abound; and if we would escape the painful doubts thence arising, we must revise and deepen our conception of prayer and its relation to the religious life. Plainly the view of prayer as a talisman or a means of getting things is inadequate to experience.

To the objection that our prayers are not answered, we can only reply by asking what we really desire in the matter. Do we mean to offer our prayer as an ultimatum? Do we wish to have our way without any reference to what God sees to be wisest and best? Are we so sure of our own judgment that we insist on it without submission to God? Is God there simply to receive and execute our dictations, and not as our Father who hears our prayer and decides for us according to his divine love and wisdom?

Prayer is often conceived as a talisman for getting something without work. Experience soon cures us of this notion in the physical realm, but in the social and spiritual world it lasts indefinitely. No one would think of raising a crop of wheat by prayer alone; but when we come to mutual improvement, to spiritual growth, to social reform and progress, there is a fancy that prayer alone is the great instrument of success. This overlooks the true nature of prayer, and also the conditional form of human progress. In all matters which God has made to depend on human action, that is not prayer, but irreverent impertinence, which pours itself out in verbal petition while neglecting to use the means which lie in our power. Everywhere God makes our blessings largely dependent on our own efforts.

The man who would win the gifts of the Spirit, if he contents himself with simple asking, will not be heard. He who seeks anything of God in an easy and careless way never obtains. Not that God must be pleaded with to make him willing to give, but that we must acquire a certain fitness before we can receive. But when the soul is in full earnest, when with each new rebuff or disheartening silence its resolution takes deeper root and its effort grows more intense, then the answer comes: O Soul, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

And if the answer should not come in the form in which we have sought it, it would in some better way. We pray for physical good, and God answers with spiritual life. We pray to be freed from the burden, and God answers with patience and strength to endure. We pray to be spared the conflict, and God gives us courage to fight the good fight of faith. The great end of religious effort is a developed soul, a soul with a deep sense of God, a soul in which faith, courage, and resolution are at their highest.—Condensed from The Essence of Religion by Borden P. Bowne.

What Jesus Taught about Prayer. See Explanations and Comments.

Jesus's Conception of Prayer. There is a kind of prayer which is concerned entirely with our own affairs. In a history of Wessex which I once read there is recorded a quaint prayer of this kind, uttered by a man named John Ward, who lived in 1727. This was his prayer: "O Lord, I beseech thee to have an eye of compassion on the County of Hertfordshire, for I have a mortgage in that County. Likewise give, I beseech thee, a prosperous voyage to the Mermaid sloop, because I have not insured it." Now that is not prayer at all, it is merely an attempt to make God a partner in a commercial transaction. It is true that we are told in everything by prayer and supplication to make our requests known unto God, but surely a man comes unworthily before God, who has nothing better to talk about than his loans and mortgages, and mercantile adventures. That was Jacob's idea of God, when he received from Isaac the blessing, "God give thee the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." But there came an

hour, when the awfulness of God was revealed to him, when he saw in a dream the angel-crowded ladder between earth and heaven, and after that he prayed, not for the fatness of the earth, but that God would give him bread only and bring him to his father's house in peace. He was looking upward now, not downward. A sweet and sacred fear possessed him, he was afraid and said, "How dreadful is this place, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven."

And this also was our Lord's conception of prayer, abundantly manifest in the prayer which specially bears his name, and has been for ages the model of all prayer. For if you examine the Lord's Prayer, what do you find? But a single petition which has to do with man's physical existence, "Give us this day our daily bread." Petition for personal good is in every other case petition for spiritual good, the forgiveness of offenses, the conquest of temptation, the deliverance from evil, and all the rest is ascription, aspiration, and consecration to the will of God.

For true prayer is not an effort to enlist the will of God on the side of our desires, but to bring our desires into conformity to the will of God. It is the desire to find the harmony of our life in the will of God; and when the end of life came for Jesus there was only one clause of his own immortal prayer which lingered on his lips, "Thy will, not mine, be done."—From a Sermon by W. J. Dawson.

Irving Bacheller's Lesson about Prayer.

If all the things came so easy, Bill, they wouldn't
hev but little worth,
An' some one with a gift o' prayer 'ud mebby own
the earth.
It's the toil ye give to git a thing, the sweat an'
blood an' care,
That makes the kind o' argument that ought to
back your prayer.

Dr. Bushnell's Lesson about Prayer. A man stands in the bow of the boat and draws upon a line attached to the shore. His pull does not move the solid ground one hair's breadth, but it does move his boat towards the land. So when I attach the line of my desire fast to the everlasting throne, faith does not expect to move the throne, but to draw me closer to it, and when I get more and more into harmony with God I receive what my heart most desires. Finding my happiness in Christ, I am satisfied.

Prayer which is the Essence of Religion. Our Christian faith is that God's deepest purpose in the creation of men is that he may have spiritual children made in his image and likeness who shall know him and love him, and to whom he may communicate himself in blessing for ever and ever. And our earthly life is arranged by divine wisdom for our discipline and development as children of God. In such a life we need preeminently to recognize our dependence on God, to relate our life to his will, to seek to enter into fellowship with him. This religious desire and effort of the soul to relate itself and all its interests to God and his will is prayer in the deepest sense. This is essential prayer. It is the soul's desire after God-given faith in manifestation. It may find expression in petition, or in worship, or in obedience, or in multitudinous forces of activity; but the thing itself is always the same—the soul's striving after God. This is the prayer which may exist without ceasing, consisting, as it does, not in doing or saying this or that, but in the temper or attitude of the spirit.

Prayer in this sense is the very essence of religion. Where there is such prayer, there is religion, and where there is any spiritual religion, there is such prayer. Both alike are essentially the attempt to find God, to have communion with him, to relate our life with all its contents to the divine plan, and to subordinate our life to the divine will.—Borden P. Bowne, in The Essence of Religion.

For Discussion. 1. Christ's habit of prayer. See Chapters V, XV, and XXXIV of Dr. Jowett's Things That Matter Most.

2. The Model Prayer. See four chapters in Mornings in the College Chapel, by Francis Greenwood Peabody; The Soul's Sincere Desire, by Glenn Clark in The Atlantic for August, 1925.

3. Does prayer avail? How should one pray? See Chapter VI of The Essence of Religion, by Borden P. Bowne; chapter III of The Religion of a Layman, by Charles

Reynolds Brown; The Soul's Sincere Desire, by Glenn Clark, in The Atlantic for August, 1924; The Meaning of Prayer, by Harry Emerson Fosdick; Quiet Talks on Prayer, by S. D. Gordon.

4. Mental Discipline through Prayer. See The Record of Christian Work, January and February, 1925.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the connection between Christ's baptism and his temptation? 2. How must this testing of Jesus have become known? 3. What was the nature of his temptation? 4. What is the meaning of his first temptation? 5. Of his second? 6. Of his third? 7. In what ways do each of the temptations of Jesus come to us? 8. Why are we sometimes defeated by a temptation?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LEARNING FROM JESUS HOW TO PRAY

Beginning the Lesson. "Enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." This is the counsel which Jesus gave his followers that they might not be as the hypocrites who pray to be seen of men. The inner chamber with closed door stands for any place where we are alone with God. For Nathanael it was under the fig tree, for Peter it was on the housetop. The deepest things of the heart can be shared with God.

The Gentiles thought that they would be heard for their much-speaking, Mt. 6.7. It is the sincere speaking rather than the much speaking which reaches the throne of God. "In praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do," Jesus counseled. The emphasis is on the adjective *vain*, rather than on the noun *repetitions;* it is the rattling over of words without heed to their meaning which Jesus says is vain, useless. "When thou prayest," says Bunyan, "rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart."

A missionary brought to this country from Korea a prayer-string twenty-five feet long, on which over a thousand beads were strung. The Buddhist who uses such a string offers over a thousand prayers to Buddha daily. Beginning at one end of the string he says, "O great, adorable Buddha," and slips a bead; then he repeats, "O great, adorable Buddha," and slips another bead; and so on till he reaches the other end of the string and his task is ended. Sometimes he contents himself with saying over only the sacred syllable "Um!" Just as vain is some "saying of prayers" by Christian worshipers, who say over certain phrases without thinking much about them, perhaps even thinking of something else. Shakespeare knew the meaning of vain repetitions when he had the king in Hamlet say:

"My words go up, my thoughts remain below,
But words without thoughts never to heaven go."

A little girl understood this when she said: "When you pray, if you don't care hard about it, your prayers don't go up out of the room at all. They just hit against the ceiling and come right down. Why, my room is all cluttered up with them, all over the floor, prayers I didn't really care about, but just said."

Learning from Jesus how to Pray. See Explanations and Comments.

For What to Pray. Most boys have played with a bow and arrow. If the bow-string is loose and you fit the arrow on it and try to shoot, it will do nothing more than fall at your feet. But if you tighten the string, and then fit the arrow and shoot, it will fly off a long distance. That is the difference between saying our prayers and praying. When we kneel down and say our prayers without thinking what we are doing or saying, they do not go very far, but when we really pray with all our heart, then the prayer goes up to God and he answers.

What ought we to talk to God about in our prayers? First of all, we must thank him for the good things that he has given us. Everything that we have has come from him.

Then we ought never to pray without asking him to forgive our sins. We all do a great many wrong and wicked things every day. God says that if we come and tell him about our sins he will forgive them, so we ought always to ask for forgiveness of sins.

Third, we can ask God to give us what we want. But we must be very careful how we ask it. If you wanted a quarter and went to your father for it, do you

think he would be more likely to give it to you if you said, "Father, I want some money, and you must give it to me," or if you said, "Father, I need some money. I wish you would give it to me, unless you think it would be better for me not to have it." God wants us to ask him for what we need, but he also wants us to be willing not to have it if it is not best for us.

Again, we must not forget others in our prayers. When we meet a person who is always talking about himself we know that he is a selfish person, and we soon become very tired of him. God does not want us to talk about ourselves alone in our prayers. That would be a very selfish sort of prayer. We ought never to forget to ask him to remember those who have not the same good things that we have.

And he wants us to tell him that we love him and are trying to serve him. Your mother likes to hear you tell her that you love her, and no man ought to be too old to do that. God, too, loves to hear us say that we love and serve him.—Stuart Nye Hutchison, in For the Children's Hour.

An Unanswered Prayer. Little Jane was saying her prayers. "And, please," she begged, "make Rome the capital of Turkey."

"Oh, Jane," exclaimed her mother, "why did you say that?"

"Because I put it like that in my examination papers today."

What do you think about her prayer?

"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also," said Paul.

Ask and It Shall Be Given You. "If it were really for your good, Dick, I should let you go. I am sorry to disappoint you, to deny you this thing that you think you want, but you can't go. Some day you will thank me for deciding in that way for you."

Father's tone was regretful but firm, and he didn't tell his boy that he knew about the young fellows who had invited him to go camping with them.

At the moment Dick, who was younger than the others and who was flattered by their invitation, thought his father harsh, unloving and hard-hearted. But a few days later he knew how truly kind and wise that adverse decision had been. It had kept him out of a succession of escapades that landed several of his would-be fellow campers in jail; it had kept him away from evil influences that might have marred his whole life.

God treats his children like that sometimes. It is easy to grow bitter and defiant over unanswered prayers, ungranted desires, things denied that you think you want and are sure you ought to have. But—sometimes God lets folks have their own way. The Psalmist says of one such instance: "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul."

Do you want your own way on such terms? It is a high price to pay. Why not try the better method? Make God's will your will; want the things that he wants for you; do the things that he plans for you. Then the thing you think you want will be yours in full measure and will bring, not leanness, but riches of grace to your soul.—The Youth's Companion.

One who Knows the Use of Prayer. Prayer to me means speaking to my Father in Heaven, who yet somehow lives on earth enough to hear me, and not only knows what I want, but also what I really need, or what is best for me, and moreover, who is sure to give it to me.

I approach him exactly as any one else to whom I would take a petition, and I address him as my common sense suggests, in perfect confidence that that is the way he would wish me to treat him. I credit him with knowing how much I want a thing, and whether I am willing to do all in my own power to obtain it. That is, I consider he will look to me, as it were, to be willing to pay the price. I never expect him to do my share.—Grenfell.

Sentence Sermon.

O thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!—James Montgomery.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Jesus tempted? 2. What is said in Heb. 2.17, 18; 4.15, about the temptation of Jesus? 3. What is the Bible's first story of a temptation? 4. What is temptation? 5. Is it a sin? 6. What is a sin in regard to temptation? 7. What are some of the temptations which come to boys and girls? 8. How may they be overcome?

LESSON V—JANUARY 30

THE CHRISTIAN OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

GOLDEN TEXT: In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. Hebrews 2.18

LESSON Luke 4.1-13; 1 Corinthians 10.12, 13

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.31-39

LUKE 4.1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness 2 during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread. 4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. 5 And he led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; 10 for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee:

11 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

1 CORINTHIANS 10.12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SCENE AND NATURE OF THE TEMPTATION, Lk. 4.1, 2. Yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit, who had come to him in a special way at his baptism, Jesus went from the Jordan into the wilderness, there to meditate undisturbed upon the work God had given him to do. During forty days spent there, a period referred to here perhaps as a "round number," representing many days, he was "tempted of the devil." As the story is told in Mark, Jesus seems to have waged his great struggle throughout his wilderness sojourn, but as told in Matthew and Luke the specific temptations seem to have come at the end of the period.

Jesus himself must have related this temptation, for in no other way could it have become known. We have the account as Jesus gave it of a conflict which took place in his mind, an inner and spiritual struggle, which he pictured by a series of fitting images which his followers would understand. We cannot believe that had Jesus listened to the words of the devil in person, knowing that they were of the evil one (as the literal interpretation of the story puts it), they would have held any temptation for him. The devil is represented as standing in person beside him, pointing to the stones around them, transporting him to the top of a hill, and to the pinnacle of the temple. "There must be something so attractive about a temptation, so deceptive, so persuasive, that even a good man shall feel inclined to accept the invitation. The choice which we all make, sinners though we are, is not between the known good and the known bad: it is between two courses of action, each of which appears to be good. It is very rarely that we sin, saying boldly to ourselves, 'This is plainly in defiance of the will of God, but I will do it.' No, we somehow persuade ourselves that darkness is light, and evil is good. We do the bidding of the devil, but in order to get us to do it he has to disguise himself so that we may not recognize him. If the devil came, the plain devil, and said, 'Do this,' we would not do it. It is not in that manner that we are tempted. Still less was Christ thus tempted. The sight of the tempter, the consequent knowledge that the suggestion of his pointing finger was the suggestion of evil, would have made any true temptation totally impossible" (George H. Hodges).

Moreover, it was the only way in which he could make his disciples understand his temptations and gain therefrom their helpful lessons. "So great was the distance, mental, moral and spiritual, between the Master and his disciples that, had he recorded his experiences with prosaic accuracy, and not poetic mysticism they could

not have understood him. The disguised, subtle, and plausible suggestions of evil in which his moral discernment and spiritual vision discovered temptations, would not have appeared dangerous or injurious to their blunter sensibilities. It was quite in accordance with his usual method as a teacher that he should seek to reach the reason and grip the conscience by embodying truth in a tale."

II. THE TEMPTATION TO USE POWER FOR SELFISH ENDS, TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE LIMITATIONS OF HIS HUMANITY, Lk. 4.3, 4. During a long period Jesus had eaten nothing, and when he was hungry the devil said unto him, "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread." The word *If* may be taken in the sense of *since:* Since you have the power (Jesus had just been assured of this at his baptism), why not make use of it for yourself? The question which Jesus had to settle was, should he for his personal relief use power which was given him for the sake of the kingdom, or should he trust his Father and accept whatever sufferings his Father might send? His answer was, Thou shalt trust.

"Everywhere today the same temptation presses upon us all. In the use of the positions in which we have been placed, of the power involved, of the money we handle, of the opportunities presented—in all alike the power of this temptation is felt. It is hardly possible to take up a paper without seeing some illustration of the abuse of trust. Our generation needs a great revival of the simple sense of fidelity to our trusts. No one of us is likely to cultivate too sensitive a conscience concerning any power that has come into his possesion. Let him ask himself how his power has come? for what end it was given? whether he is using it simply and solely for that end, or is making it, rather, a means for his own personal gain?" (Henry Churchill King).

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," were the words with which Jesus met the temptation. If we recall the setting of the quotation from Deuteronomy as it is given in full in Matthew—Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,—we see that his meaning is: The Israelites were hungry and were fed by the word of God, for he commanded his manna to fall: so I, who am hungry, may be miraculously fed if it is his will: my part is to trust to his providence, not to my own. Throughout his ministry, Jesus never once used for his own advantage his power to work a miracle.

"Jesus has nothing to say against bread-making; in another place he feeds a great multitude. When, however, it is a question of the supreme need of life, he knows that there are necessities more profound than hunger. The fundamental craving of human life, he well knows—and many a human being, though oppressed by poverty and hunger, still feels the deeper need—is for capacity, inspiration, regeneration, personality, power" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

III. THE TEMPTATION TO ESTABLISH AN EARTHLY RATHER THAN A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, Lk. 4.5-8. The Jews were chafing under the Roman yoke. They expected a Messiah who would free them from Rome and establish an earthly kingdom greater than that of their father David. What might Jesus not accomplish if he yielded to their expectations and established an earthly kingdom! All his countrymen would rally to his side if he adopted the rôle of a temporal Messiah; for such a Messiah they would sacrifice their lives freely and gladly. The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Jesus might have all this authority and the glory of them—if he would pay the price. Would it not be a quicker and easier road to travel than the road to Calvary? To seek temporal instead of eternal good, to build up a material instead of a spiritual kingdom, would be to ally himself with the devil, to worship before him.

"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve": with these words Jesus met the temptation of ambition. There may be no compromise with evil.

"The temptation to the utilization of political power for an unselfish use is most intelligible. I have known men who in their hearts abhorred the concessions they had to make to get political and financial leaders to throw power on the side of a good cause, the arrogant ignorance of moral issues they had to put up with, the violation of their own self-respect to which they had to submit, the toning down of their own moral fervor. To none

of these would they ever have yielded if it had not been for the 'good of the cause.' Jesus could have longed to get hold of power for the good of men with such urgency as to constitute it a real temptation. Leaders of the Christian church have been yielding to the same temptation for fifteen hundred years" (Francis J. McConnell).

IV. THE TEMPTATION TO PRESUME UPON GOD'S CARE, Lk. 4.9-12. The world was always asking for a "sign" of his Sonship, and conscious as he was of his oneness with the Father, there came to Jesus the thought that by throwing himself off from a high place and compelling his Father to guard him from harm, he could at the outset of his ministry win the world's faith in him as the Messiah. "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God" was his answer to the temptation. "'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given it.' Why not? Why did he prefer the slow, laborious, hazardous, often inefficient method of teaching, of living, and of the cross? He did so because that only was the true method. To leap unhurt from a pinnacle of the temple was to rival a mountain goat or a chamois, but it had no connection at all with spiritual power and was no sign of disposition and ability to save men from their sins. To abandon the region of men's actual need and work wonders, not for their relief but for mere display, was to trespass against the Father's love and to mistake the Father's intentions" (Marcus Dods).

V. THE TEMPTER VANQUISHED, Lk. 4.13. When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season. "Yes, for a season, coming back again, with new perplexities, new problems, new deceptions. Once our Lord spoke of his whole ministry as a series of temptations, saying to his disciples, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.' It is even said of him, in words much bolder than we would venture to use today, that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered: as if, even for him, obedience was a lesson hard to learn. He had to learn it, as we do, taught by the divine tuition of painful experience. We commonly think of him as being so perfectly good by birth and nature that he never had to try. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that he did have to try, and try hard. And the story of the temptation illustrates it. 'We have not an high piest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are.' It is true that the writer immediately adds, 'yet without sin.' But it is plain that he was not easily without sin. He conquered in the wilderness, and in every other place, but never without a battle" (Dean Hodges).

"Christ distinctly recognizes temptation as an ineluctable element in human life. Does he not teach men to pray, in a prayer which he meant to be universal, 'Lead us not into temptation'? He sums up his association with his disciples in the grateful acknowledgment that they have continued with him in his temptations, warns Peter that he will be tempted to deny him, and tells the disconsolate disciples who have fallen asleep at the gateway of Gethsemane that they should have watched and prayed lest they entered into temptation. It is a striking thing that Christ should thus speak so much of temptation in his last hours, and should speak of his disciples as companions and sharers in his own temptation; but if any one of us dared to write his own biography with unflinching truth, would not his temptations compose the larger part of it? We should have to record the eternal struggle of the spirit against the flesh, the battle between good and evil impulses, the contest between conscience and desire, for in these struggles is the chief element of our history, and the one thing about our lives which has imperishable interest. What a man gets out of life by way of earthly reward or reputation is of no importance; what he becomes under the fierce testings of life is of supreme importance. And so, the true biography of any human creature, were it written with just regard for the supreme elements in human life, would bear for title, not 'My Successes, my Achievements, my Triumphs'—but 'My Temptations'" (W. J. Dawson).

VI. THERE IS DANGER IN FEELING SECURE FROM TEMPTATION, 1 Cor. 10.12. "Wherefore," writes Paul, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." A feeling of security leads to carelessness.

"Distrust yourselves when you are most conscious of your strength. Set a special watch over the pen of your pet graces; they may ruin you, they

have ruined many: be self-distrustful, and in God's strength be self-confident" (Joseph Parker).

VII. TEMPTATION MAY BE CONQUERED, 1 Cor. 10.13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear. The Greek word *anthropinos* means literally "of or belonging to, man." Some commentators think the Revisers, in translating it "such as man can bear" have read into the word more than it really contains, and prefer the translation "common to man"—There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

"That is the first thing to remember. For this is one of the pleas behind which men shelter themselves when asked to account for their failure. 'There never was such a temptation as mine,' they say. Men have a trick of salvaging their consciences and excusing their miserable collapses on the ground that the temptations to which they were exposed were of quite unique and extraordinary force" (J. D. Jones).

For God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. He permits the temptation, but takes care that there is a way of escape so that we may be able to endure it.

"No man ever entered a blind alley with temptation. The road of temptation is always a forked road, and one of the forks leads out of the difficulty." "God makes an open road, but the man himself must walk in it." "This does not imply that we shall always overcome whenever we are tempted, but it does imply that we always may. In other words, it conveys the assurance that we shall never be placed where to sin will be a necessary or inevitable thing."

"You must make that belief your own, if you are to emerge victorious out of your conflicts with temptation. To those who are down, who are dead beat, who are almost tempted to give up, we must say again and again, every temptation—without any exception—every temptation is to be overcome. And the grand reason for our confidence that every temptation can be overcome is that God is faithful" (J. D. Jones).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Command this stone that it become bread, Lk. 4.3. Oriental bread is made in small, thin, flat loaves, or cakes, and many of the stones lying about in the wilderness resembled them in shape. The sight of the stones may have increased the pangs of hunger. The Jews were looking for a Messiah who would perform just such a miracle as that of turning stones into bread. The rabbis said that when he came the trees would bear fruit the year round, and a single grape would load a wagon and from it men would draw wine as from a cask.

He led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, Lk. 4.5. "A man will take a visitor to the roof of his house in Palestine today to show him the beautiful view, declaring as he does so that 'We can see the whole world from the top of my house.'"

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was Christ's habit in regard to the Scriptures? In regard to prayer?

The Background of Luke 4.1-13. The temptation of Jesus immediately followed his baptism with its assurance that he was the Son of God in whom God was well pleased. Baptism and temptation were parts of one experience. In the one, Jesus received his call to consecration; in the other, he considered the nature of the call, the way in which it must be accomplished, and the goal to which it would ultimately lead him.

The wilderness, the place of the temptation, was the desolate, hilly region west of the northern end of the Dead Sea.

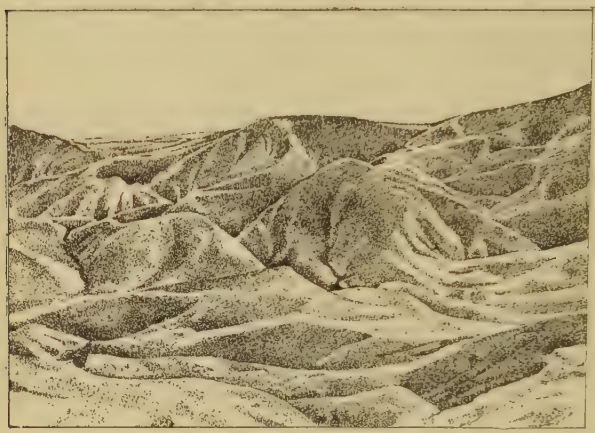
The Background of 1 Corinthians 10.12, 13. In this chapter of his letter Paul is admonishing the Corinthians by recalling Israel's history, recalling the escape from bondage in Egypt and the life in the wilderness, and the various temptations to which some of them succumbed. "Now these things happened unto them by way of example," Paul says; "and they were written for our admonition." "Where-

fore," and this is his conclusion of the whole matter, "do you who are trusting in your own might be on your guard lest you, too, should fall."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: 2 Corinthians 10.3-5; Philippians 4.11-13; Hebrews 2.14-18; 4.14-16.

Each one's reaction to temptation depends somewhat upon his desires, largely upon habit, even in small matters, much upon the tone of the public opinion to which he is exposed, and partly upon the idea that is enthroned in his imagination. The Church-school teacher cannot seek directly to control the individual tendencies of pupils—they were set by heredity; nor to change the habits which have been set by early training; nor the tone caused by what is to them public opinion, which is controlled by conditions largely economic. What he can seek to do directly is to enthrone a controlling ideal.



The Wilderness of Judea

This is why it is so important to present Jesus as a positive, constructive ideal. He will lead us in our battle with evil. In his temptation he is our Exemplar. Seek to give your pupils a positive, inspiring vision of an active, powerful, sympathetic Christ, able and willing to help them in all seasons of temptation and trouble.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

Beginning the Lesson. The great drama of the Book of Job opens with an assembly in heaven at which Satan presents himself. "Whence comest thou?" he is asked, and he replies, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Jehovah asks him, "a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil." Satan ascribes Job's goodness to his prosperity, to the happy circumstances of his life, and Jehovah gives him permission to try what he can do to test Job. Satan does his worst, but Job comes from the testing triumphant.

There is a drama of testing in the New Testament. But it is a very real testing, endured by Jesus as he was about to enter upon the mission for which he was sent into the world. "In his tremendous sense of sonship, of mission and of power, Jesus took to his temptation a threefold consciousness. The elements in this threefold consciousness, of power, of mission, and of Sonship, were for Jesus a divine call, to which he made answer: 'I must be worthy of the power granted; I must be a consistent Founder of a spiritual kingdom; I must prove a true Son.'"

"I must be worthy of the power granted": to what temptation was this his answer?

The Struggle. "Son of God! I am the Son of God, owned as such by my Father once again!" The words were singing in his heart through the long rapture so profound that bodily needs were transcended and forgot.

"Oh, this measureless Power. . . . Made mine in the waters of Jordan! Yet not for myself, but that I might give it to the world. . . . The world that so needs God! The world that calls!"

A momentary silence falls, then with a weary sigh he speaks again.

"I am anhungered. . . . Dawns and sunsets—how many!—have passed me unawares. . . . The Son of God. . . . And the Father hath put all things into my hands."

"Make these stones bread!" It comes like a voice from without, a distant murmur falling on his ear,—the voice of the calling world, the world that God desired, the multitude for whom this power had been given to him in trust. To bring in the Kingdom of God to such a world as this must surely mean to banish every kind of want from men.

There is a moment of irresolution, as the murmur dies away. Then the single thread of silver speech flows on again.

"Build the Kingdom of my Father in the world by pandering to mere physical craving in myself or others? Refuse to taste the pain and finitude of human life? Listen, perchance, some day, to the voice of prudence arguing so reasonably, so plausibly: Save thyself if thou wouldst save thy gospel? That cannot be God's way for me. 'Tis thus his Kingdom must be founded among men,—by the voice of God's spirit, uttered through my soul, and passed from heart to heart. I dare not listen to the world's gross clamor of sense, nor found the Kingdom by appeals to bodily gratification. I dare not be a Bread-Messiah. I must wait for the answer of the human soul, wakened at length to the Spirit that would speak to it through me. Ah, here alone lies man's true life, the life that God would give—through me." So with a word from the ancient law he thrusts the temptation from him.

"My Son! My Son! In thee I am well-pleased": the beatific melody comes floating back and repeats itself within his heart again. And the soliloquy is resumed. "The object of my Father's deepest love; and all the riches of his Power at my command! . . . Spirits of the Unseen, I may bid you come and go! Demons, I am your Master! The Messiah! Chief servant in the bringing of the Kingdom! 'Tis my duty to assert my claim before the world. . . . But how?"

Another pause, and through the stillness comes a confused murmur, heard as from without, the voice of the Spirit of the World again—a demonic voice, yet all in the garb and tones of sanctity this time, speaking the very language of Holy Writ, prompting and suggesting close at hand. The vision changes, and the rock on which he sits on the steep hillside shapes itself in his fancy as the temple's cornerstone. And from the shadowy courts below the sound creeps up, tumult of priest and scribe and Pharisee, of pious superstition, legal arrogance, and spurious dream.

"A sign! A sign!" they clamor. "Thou art of Nazareth. Thy cradle and thy home were lowly. If thou be the Son of God, then demonstrate thy claim. Summon the angels to sustain thee. Is not the promise written? Come! Fling thyself down!"

"What? Shall I thus confirm my Messianic commission,—silence the priest and scribe,—win the gaping wonder of the superstitious throng,—startle men into faith? . . . But what kind of faith? . . . Presume on the laws of the Supernal Power entrusted to me? Nay, the true way of God's Anointed is surely the way of self-effacement, stealing into men's hearts by unobtrusive gentleness, by human sympathy and love. Only along the pathway of the humble shall I keep company with my God, my lowly-hearted, my Eternal Father. . . . Tempt God! Force his hand,—strain his complacency in me to breaking-point by sensational self-glory? Away with the thought! I will make no vain claim, nor sustain it on an empty wonder. If I cannot live in lowly obedience, I do not wish men to confess my right to be *the Son;* but I *will* obey, I will not tempt God."

Again, with a severe rebuking word from the ancient law he thrusts the impious suggestion from his mind.

He passes at length in fancy out into the presence of all the nations of the world, men from the East and West and North and South for whom this Kingdom was divinely destined,—not for Israel alone. And mingling with the vision come impressions of the vast World-Power that had flung the conqueror's shield across so many kingdoms, and cast its shadow even on his people's holiest shrine.

"Power? World-power? Yes, I too seek for that,—a world-wide sway for my Father's Kingdom. That is his purpose—and my dream. The restoration of the throne of David! The prophets longed for it. The people wait for it. Yea, a throne whose scepter shall stretch out towards 'the islands of the sea'! And ever since that liberating hour at Jordan I have been conscious of haunting, heavenly power. With such gifts from God,—all human qualities transfigured by the Spirit's dower,—I may climb, if I choose, by easy strides to the world's throne by the world's way. . . ."

And as from a lofty mountain-top the while he mused he saw the kingdoms with their glory pass before his eyes. And a presence, shadowy, sinister, colossal, seemed to shape itself more sharply now against the growing gloom.

"The world's throne! . . . But by the ways of the spirit of the world? By the way of self-assertion, egoistic aggrandizement, the way of the conqueror, controlling the movements of vast hosts of men? . . . What? Capitulate to the earth spirit, yield homage and allegiance to the 'prince of the power of the air'? . . . Whose then would the world be when I had won it? 'Twould be but the possession of him to whom I had sold my soul and its gift divine—a slave! Get thee behind me, Satan! Let me in lowly reverence wait on God. Let me take the way, not of material brute force, directed and controlled by self, but of heavenly power flowing from the fount of love. And if love mean sacrifice and sorrow,—if that be the price of spiritual victory—God's will be done. Him only must I serve."—Condensed from The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus, by J. A. Robertson.

How a Group of Armenians Met the Temptation to Secure Bread. During the war a little group of Christian Armenians reached the Syrian desert and there, east of the Jordan, ill and famished as they were, they organized a church and carried on their services. Their only hope of escaping starvation was in the church at Jerusalem. A delegation was sent to the Christians in Jerusalem with this message: "Our Armenian congregation in the desert east of the Jordan sends greeting to the church in Jerusalem. We beg your advice which alternative to choose; shall we deny our Christ by becoming Moslems, or starve to death? As the church in Jerusalem decides, the church in the wilderness will do."

What could the church in Jerusalem say? They had neither food nor fuel for relief. They spent a day in anguished prayer; then they gave their answer—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The church in the wilderness accepted the decision. Where their Master had refused bread and kingdoms for himself, they, his followers, laid down their lives for him.

Why We Are Tempted. Temptation is the word we use to describe the testings of life in the creation of character. We know very well what a test means. The bridge which is to carry the traffic of a continent across a great river is tested to the fraction of an inch, for the builder knows that the slightest miscalculation may produce catastrophe and disaster. The ship which is to dare the enmity of stormy oceans is tested in every bolt and beam, before she goes forth to the encounter of pounding seas and unloosed hurricanes. So life has its moral tests. Without these moral tests, life would be mere animal existence. No prize is won without contest. The statesman finds he cannot have the palm without the dust, public honor without private drudgery. The writer does not succeed by accident; his final efficiency is the fruit of endless effort. The athlete has his tale to tell of long grilling discipline which at length makes his body the perfect instrument of his will. If we say we want the prize without the test, the plain answer is that it is not according to the rules of the game. Contest is the instrument of development. "I was born for contest," wrote Stevenson. So are we all.—W. J. Dawson.

Christ Understands. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world by his temptation, as well as by his crucifixion. In the wilderness sin meets him, as on the cross death meets him; and he suffers. He conquers, but he suffers. He bruises the serpent's head, but the serpent stings his heel. Thus it is that he can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He knows how it is. He knows by hard experience how bitter a thing it is to fight with the devil. He in whom we see God, sympathizes. He who will judge us tempted sinners, understands.—George Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

In seasons of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.—W. W. Walford.

The Source of Help in Temptation. Temptation strikes us suddenly. The great needs of life arise so emergently that if we are going to be able to deal with them we have to have something that can rise up just as instantaneously. And there is Christ. "Apart from me," is his word ever present in that hour, "Apart from me you are doomed; with me you are safe."—Robert E. Speer.

For Discussion. 1. You can judge a man by the size of his temptations. The devil never wastes his strength on anybody. When a heart's small and mean, he comes to it with small and mean temptations. When it's big and strong and aims high, then he puts out his awful power.—Eden Phillpotts.

2. The temptation of Jesus and our temptations. See Chapters XXIV and XXV of Things that Matter Most, by J. H. Jowett; Quiet Talks About the Tempter, by S. D. Gordon; Chapter V of Listening to God, by Hugh Black; Chapter XV of The Purpose and Use of Comfort, by Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What universal law does the end of the parable state? 2. Give examples of its working in the physical, mental, and spiritual domains. 3. What do we mean by Christian stewardship? 4. What is its scope? 5. What should a Christian's attitude be toward the use of his money? 6. His life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW CHRIST HELPS THE TEMPTED

Beginning the Lesson. A chaplain in a State Reform School gave the boys questionnaires at various times which they answered frankly. "Why does a boy go wrong?" "Why did you go wrong?" were questions once asked.

Here are some of their answers: "Many temptations were too strong"; "There were more temptations to go wrong than to go right"; "Wrong got the better of me"; "I can't get over the fight going on in my heart by the right and the wrong"; "They got the devil into me."

"The boys felt that they were up against too many and too hard temptations," the chaplain commented. "The forces within were not able to stand against such temptations. They felt that it was an unequal contest. They were conscious of a lack of moral stamina to meet the assaults against their wills."

What did those boys need? What is our lesson topic today? What is our Golden Text? Who will tell the story of the temptations of Jesus?

How a Boy in India Endured the Second Temptation. Sadhu Sundar Singh is a native of India who is a Christian and has been traveling and speaking in England. He was a lad of sixteen when he renounced the Sikh religion and openly professed Christianity. Every possible effort was made by his friends to win him back to their beliefs. One day his uncle, a very rich man, invited him to his beautiful home. Taking him down into the cellar the uncle opened a large safe and showed him priceless jewels and roll upon roll of bank notes—such as Sundar had never before seen. "All these shall be yours," vowed the uncle, "if you only will remain a Sikh." It was a great temptation, but Sundar was enabled to say "No."

A Proposal Resembling Satan's in the Third Temptation. Professor Tyndall, in the interest of a scientific skepticism, once made a proposal to the religious world. He offered to subject the question of prayer's value to the test of experiment. He proposed to have two hospitals, each filled with sick people, the one the subject of prayer, the other not. If the one for which prayer was made turned out more convalescents than the other, it would be in favor of the Christian doctrine; if not, it would show the valuelessness of the whole process.

Until I heard Professor Tyndall's proposal I never understood the meaning of the second temptation recorded by Matthew. The cases are almost identical. The tempter says to Jesus: "You can put the power of your faith to the test of a public experiment. Throw yourself from the heights before the eyes of the crowd, and let them see whether God will or will not keep his promise." In both cases a negative result was to be expected. And it was right to expect such a result, but not on the ground that the promise to answer is a delusion: the truth is, neither the hospital test nor the pinnacle test gave room for any prayer at all. It was not prayer for divine care, but an experiment on God. You can experiment with wireless telegraphy without reference to the message, but not with prayer. The prayer is the message. Not the word, but the wish; not the sound, but the sympathy; not the kneeling, but the need, makes mine a prayer.—George Matheson.

The Reason for Temptation. We have all seen a boy sail a kite. The kite soars against the wind, and the tighter the string is held the harder the kite tugs at it, and the higher it soars. So it is with us; we can hardly be said to possess virtue till we find ourselves in active opposition with something that is not virtue.

When the kite sails with a loose string it drops, because there is not enough opposition to keep it afloat; and when men have no odds against them in life, nothing to draw out their vital force of opposition, they also soon trail along the ground. This is the meaning of temptation; it is discipline. We do not enter the world ready-made; we are engaged in the making of ourselves, and in the process, temptation must needs play a tremendous part.—W. J. Dawson, in the Divine Challenge.

Take Heed lest you Fall. Some years ago I was in a boat with a chum of mine, rowing along the shore in a bay on the western coast. We were rowing along slowly and lazily, noticing how muddy the water was, the shore a hundred feet away, when suddenly the boat began to slow up and stop.

"What are you quitting for?" I asked.

"Why," he said, "I am not quitting, but the old boat is fast on something. We must have run into the mud."

I said, "Why there's plenty of water here. Put your oar down!"

He took his oar out of the oarlock, and reached down. The water was five or six feet deep. Then slowly over the edge of the boat there came the slimy arm of a devil fish. He jumped back from it, and I jumped back, and snatched the oar, and began to hack at the arm that had fastened to the boat. Then on the other side another arm began to come up. We realized our danger, and took the two oars, and began to pole for the shore, until we got near enough where we could jump clear of the boat and get clear of the danger.

In days since then I have looked back at that moment, and it has seemed to me a picture of youth passing through life's experiences, without any serious sense of danger, when of a sudden out of the muddy depths of a perilous place some vicious arm reaches up, and before you know it, the trend toward the right begins to slow up, and you are in the arms of danger. Young people, do not let anybody ever laugh you into the idea of thinking there is no peril in the sins all around us! Those sins can seize you, and they can seize me, people as good as we are are going down every day. No! I need the Savior's help and I need it greatly. You need him, and you need him now.—A. W. Beaven.

You Can Conquer Temptation. One time in my boyhood I was fighting a terrific temptation, about which my mother knew nothing except that boys of that age had fights that were real. I had led in prayer at morning prayers, and must have dropped some word in my prayer that was a window through which my mother looked into my soul and saw that fight going on. After prayers were over, and I had stepped into the hall to get my cap as I was going to school, I remember mother's coming out, putting her hand on my shoulder and saying:

"Go on, my boy! You will win!"

And I did, too.

This is a vital value of religion. When you put your life in touch with Jesus Christ it puts behind you the lift of a great companionship. You do not fight alone. He stands behind you and says, "Go on! Do what is right! You can win. Play the game!"—A. W. Beaven.

Sentence Sermons. "While praying to be delivered from a temptation, do not peep at it through your fingers."

"Every time that we yield to temptation
It is easier for us to do wrong;
Every time we resist temptation,
It is easier for us to be strong."

The heart that is fullest of good works has in it least room for Satan's temptations.—Bunyan.

"A good traffic rule on the road of life: When you meet temptation, turn to the right."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the word "talent" mean in the parable? 2. Why didn't the householder in the parable give the same amount to each one? 3. Why did the man who only earned two talents receive the same praise as the man who earned five talents? 4. Do all have the same ability? Do all have the same duty as regards the use of what ability they have? 5. What does our word "talent" mean, and whence is it derived? 6. How should a Christian use his talents?

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 6

THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Matthew 25.21

LESSON Matthew 25.14-30 DEVOTIONAL READING 2 Corinthians 9.6-11

MATTHEW 25.14 For *it is* as *when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Straightway he that receiveth the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. 17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two. 18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. 20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; 25 and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. 26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. 28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE COMMISSIONS, verses 14, 15. Jesus is speaking to his disciples about the Kingdom of Heaven, and he begins a parable by saying that the situation is comparable to that of a man who, about to go into another country, calls his servants and delivers to them his goods. "The story is true to the oriental life of the period; for, when, a wealthy man was leaving his home for awhile, two courses were open to him for the arrangement of his affairs: either he might make his confidential slaves his agents, committing to them the tilling of his land, and giving to them his money to be used by them in trade; or he might take advantage of the money-changing system which had been introduced by the Phœnicians, and which was at the time in full operation throughout the Roman Empire" (Wm. M. Taylor).

In his interpretation of the parable, the "man" represents Christ; his "goods" stand for all possessions—life, physical and mental powers, etc.—which are represented as God's property, entrusted to men, his servants, as a loan.

The servants were all trustworthy, but they differed in capability, and the master apportioned his goods among them according to his judgment of the ability of each. Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. Even the one talent represented a considerable sum, about one thousand dollars, whose value is recognized when we recall that a denarius was a day's wage, and a talent was the equivalent of six thousand denarii. In the interpretation of the parable, the "talents" are the "goods," whatever is given to each one for use and improvement. Our use of the word "talent" to signify mental gift or skill in accomplishing anything is derived from its use in this parable.

II. HOW THE COMMISSIONS WERE CARRIED OUT, verses 16-18. The one that received five talents lost no time but straightway went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner, he that received the two talents doubled them. But he that received the one talent went away and dug in the earth and hid his lord's money. It was a common practise in the East to bury money for safe-keeping, but his lord wanted increase as well as safety.

"Not in husbanding our strength, but in yielding it in service; not in burying our talents, but in administering them; not in hoarding our seed in the barn, but in scattering it; not in following an earthly human policy, but in surrendering ourselves to the will of God, do we find the safe and blessed path" (F. B. Meyer).

III. REPORTS AND REWARDS, verses 19-23. After a long time the lord returned and made a reckoning with his servants. The one who had doubled his five talents is commended in these words: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." "The master means to make extensive use of the talents and energy of one who has shown himself so enthusiastic and trustworthy in a limited sphere. He bids him enter into the joy of lordship, he is to be rewarded by admission to fellowship in possession, partnership" (A. B. Bruce).

Work well done brings greater work to do. Doing the right brings power to do more right. The reward is in the doing, in the enlarged capacity and in the approving conscience which bespeaks the divine approval.

Then in the same words the Master commended the one who had doubled his two talents.

Not as much is expected of the two-talent man as of the five-talent man, but the same faithfulness is required of each. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not, said Paul. We are not responsible for the three or four talents which we have not, but we are responsible for the one or two talents which we have.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE ONE WHO FAILED TO USE HIS TALENT, verses 24-30. "Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man (austere man, Lk. 19.21)" said he who had received one talent, "reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter." He uses proverbial expressions for an unscrupulous, grasping man. It is "all work and no pay" in his lord's service, his lord "takes all the increase and gives the laborer no share in the reward," he thus says. "And I was afraid," the servant continued, "and went away and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own."

The other two men "came and brought"; this man only "came and said." Often this is the trouble with the one-talent man—he finds some fault, utters some criticism, but does nothing.

"Thou wicked and slothful servant!" exclaimed his lord. "You call me hard, I call you a churl" (A. B. Bruce). "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, Lk. 19.22. If thou knewest this, thou oughtest to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." Turning to men who would carry out his will, he said, "Take ye away therefore the talent from him who made no use of it, and give it unto him who hath ten talents, who will make the most use of it." Then he gave voice to a general principle which, hard and inexorable, is always true: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." No better interpretation of the seeming paradox in the last part of this statement could be found than the words of Aristotle: "He who hath this or that, and makes no use of it, may not improperly be said both to have it and not to have it."

"In every realm nature withdraws her gift from him who neglects or misuses it. Neglecting vision, the mole is punished with blindness; neglecting wings, the flying-fish finds these members hanging feebly by its side; neglecting to use the sap it receives, the branch withers, rots and falls away from the tree; while that monk who made a vow not to lift his hand from his side for a period of years found at last his arm a withered, helpless thing—dead, yet hanging to a living body. For use is life, neglect is atrophy and death. There is no talent that comes unasked; there is no grace of mind and heart that stays unurged. Happy, indeed, is he who hath ears to hear the still small voice that whispers 'He who neglects his finer spiritual sentiment shall find that the inner light hath failed'" (Newell Dwight Hillis).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His own servants, verse 14. Slaves in antiquity were often artisans, or were allowed otherwise to engage freely in business, paying, as it was frequently arranged, a fixed yearly sum to their master; or they had money committed to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, and bring in to him a share of their profits.—Archbishop Trench.

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Eugène Burnand

THE THREE-TALENT, TWO-TALENT AND ONE-TALENT MEN

The lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them.

He went and traded with them, verse 16. The Jews have always been a trading people. They had in the first century the same genius for commerce as now. This is obvious from the prominent place which Jesus gives in his parables to the bank—the talents, the stewards, the questions of interest, capital, and revenue. He made use of such comparisons because he knew how familiar they were to his hearers, and the Fathers have handed down to us a saying of his which is not in the Gospels, but which belongs to the same order of thought: "Be good bankers," he is reported to have said.—Edmond Stapfer.

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, verse 27. The Greek word, translated *exchangers* or *bankers,* is derived from the *bank* or *bench* on which money was placed. There were numerous money-changers, or bankers, in Palestine, who received deposits at interest. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets have records of banking transactions which took place 1400 B. C. The rate of interest varied from four to forty per cent. The Old English word *usury* from the Latin *usura,* signified at first merely the sum paid for the use of money, but it gradually became a "fallen word," signifying exorbitant interest.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing upon the Lesson. In our lesson from the Sermon on the Mount, what did Jesus say about giving?

The Time and Place of the Giving of the Parable of the Talents. It was the last Tuesday evening in the life of Jesus. With his disciples gathered about him he was sitting on the Mount of Olives and teaching them by parables. He was leaving them to carry on his work. He had given them talents therefor—knowledge of himself and of God, instructions in righteousness and in methods of extending his kingdom. They must learn that they were responsible for the right use of these talents.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Luke 16.10-13; 1 Corinthians 4.1, 2; 1 Peter 4.7-11.

"This class," said a plain-spoken visitor, "is a vagrant and, under the law of the State, should be put in jail."

The members of the class held their breaths and looked keenly at the stranger.

"'What do I mean?' I hear you ask me," the stranger went on. "I mean just this: that of whatever quality, spirit, or texture your work is, of that quality are you. A tree is 'known by its fruit,' and you are known by your work. Doubtless you have made many good resolutions, have started much good, well-intentioned work, have had an efficient organization at one time, have dreamed a good deal of what you would do when you had reached the coveted two-hundred membership; but the truth is that you have done nothing. Any vagrant being tried for vagrancy is ready to clear himself on the plea of good intentions, of work projected, of better things expected; but the judge would never hear a word of this. You must be tried this day on the law and the evidence. The law is that to him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath. The evidence is that you have buried your talent. The fact is that you are less able to do good work now than you were before you abused the opportunity you have had, beginning a year ago. The will of a man or of a class to do and dare is weakened each time the individual or the class succumbs to the temptation to fold the hands and idle away the time. The best time to begin—though it will be harder than a year ago—is now. The worst time to begin is a year from now or a day from now."

This talk caused the laggard officials to open the secretary's book to see just how far these statements were justified. There they found:

"Resolution: Resolved that we will do something each week in the Master's vineyard, making report of such work on the first Sunday of each month."

"Report of Workers: (Blank)."

"Report of Workers: (Blank)."

The rest of the secretary's book was blank.

"I guess he is about right," said the president. "We have started one thing after another, but haven't accomplished much. Boys, we have got to get busy."

And they got busy.—W. H. Horne, in Adult Bible Class Monthly.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

SCOPE AND SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. There is a graphic account in Lew Wallace's Ben Hur of the time of reckoning between Ben Hur, who had been in a far country, and Simonides, his father's servant, who resembles the five-talent man of our parable.

"In anticipation of thy demand," Simonides began, "I have here a statement covering the property. Will it please thee to read it now?"

"Later, O Simonides, I will read the papers carefully; for the present, do thou give me their substance."

"This," said Simonides, drawing out the first leaf; "shows the money I had of thy father's, being the amount saved from the Romans; there was no property saved, only money, and that the robbers would have secured but for our Jewish custom of bills of exchange. The amount saved, being sums I drew from Rome, Alexandria, Damascus, Carthage, Valentia, and elsewhere within the circle of trade, was one hundred and twenty talents, Jewish money."

He gave the sheet to his daughter, and took the next one.

"With that amount—one hundred and twenty talents—I charged myself. Hear now my credits. I use the word, as thou wilt see, with reference rather to the proceeds gained from the use of the money."

From separate sheets he read footings and total and then said: "To these now, to the five hundred and fifty talents gained, add the original capital I had from thy father, and thou hast six hundred and seventy-three talents!—and all thine—making thee, O son of Hur, the richest subject in the world."

He took the papyri and offered them to Ben Hur. The pride perceptible in his manner was not offensive; it might have been from a sense of duty well done; it might have been for Ben Hur without reference to himself.

Taking the roll, Ben Hur arose, struggling with emotion. "I first give thanks to the Lord, who has not abandoned me," he said with a husky voice; "and my next to thee, O Simonides. Thy faithfulness outweighs the cruelty of others, and redeems our human nature."

Bible Teaching about Stewardship. The ancient Hebrews kept the law of tithing as recorded in Leviticus 27.30, 32: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's; it is holy unto Jehovah. And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto Jehovah."

The New Testament sets forth the principle of stewardship. All that we have is the gift of God: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1.17). And it is to be administered according to the law of love: "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4.10).

The most obvious lesson in all Christ's teaching Henry Drummond finds to be that there is no happiness in having and getting, but only in giving. Christ taught the principle of stewardship, and the standard he laid down in these words: "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." Our giving must not be dictated by selfishness, nor left to chance appeals, moods, or caprice. There must be systematic giving, according as God has prospered us.

And the giving required is not of our money only. The "talent" in our parable stands for any possession, whether of money or time or skill or knowledge or any ability whatsoever; it is concerned with the entire circle of human possessions. Talents shrink from disuse. Are we using ours? We have no right to let them lie idle or to waste them. Of every talent, however small, of every gift or power or advantage we possess, we are stewards, and accountable for their best use. It is no disgrace to be a one-talent man, but it is a disgrace to bury that one talent. How are you using the endowment given you? Is your life productive? What would it mean if all the talent in the world were placed in circulation?

A Christian's Financial Creed. My money is mine only in trust. It belongs to God, just as I do.

God is counting upon this money for his work. It is to build his churches and preach his gospel, train his workers and send them out, teach and heal and save his children, and help bring in a new kingdom of righteousness and brotherhood and peace.

To spend my income rightly is one of my first tasks as a Christian. Until

I settle this my prayers and confessions will be like saying "Lord, Lord," and not doing the will of my Father.

I should set aside a definite proportion of my income for the church and the service of others. I do this in acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over all my material possessions. I do this to guard against my own selfishness. I do this because it is businesslike. Giving by impulse and without system does not accord with the importance of this work.—Harris Franklin Rall.

Excerpts from Lady Astor's Talk to Women. To be well born and rich is enviable. But birth and breeding and all these blessings, I believe, should make one feel a tremendous obligation to the world. The woman of leisure owes much more to her country than the woman who must earn a living or who must sew and wash and mend for her children.

It is the motherliness in women, their instinctive desire to heal, to take care of the weak, to be anxious about the world in which their children must live, that makes it important for them to help govern. While men concern themselves with international finance, the safety of the Empire and other things, women should be in politics to keep a sharp eye on the happiness and welfare of their fellow countrymen.

As for the women who are blessed with money and leisure, they should be much more than society women. If they are blessed with these things, let them realize their responsibility in this world of duress and suffering. I have the good fortune to have money. In the last few years I have been saving all that I can in order to build some model houses in Plymouth. This is not because I believe it will solve the problem of bad housing. I do it with the hope that it may induce the public authorities and others to try and remedy the terrible, fetid slums of England. I don't consider that I am being philanthropic or bountiful. I am merely doing a little to warrant my control of this money.

I know that when I first entered the House of Commons there was much speculation about me. Many thought that I was merely a society woman in search of an avocation. But I think that I have turned out to be a hard worker, not to say bellicose. And that is because I have become so interested, so exercised by the cause of social reform. I find that I can be pugnacious over bills concerning the welfare of women and children, for prohibition and for other things.

Crown-Land Stewardship. Among the many interesting features of Baltimore is one that soon caught my attention as an adopted citizen. I refer to the widespread prevalence of ground-rents. I know of no other city in which so large a portion of the improved real estate is held, as in Baltimore, by others than the owners of the improvements.

And the explanation is more interesting still. The ground-rents are a reminder of the "crown lands" of colonial days. Recipients of such royal bounty seldom sold their land. In fact, in many instances, they could not sell; else the land, thus alienated, reverted to the "crown." So they leased their land, and the first lessees, in turn, sold their rights, until today. And the owner of the ground-rents, in these latter days, holds his title, through many intervening transfers, perhaps, by grant from the crown.

So I think of life as we receive it from God. Life is a veritable "crown land," the courtesy of whose use is accorded us by royal bounty. Not for any special grace or desert on our part; chiefly, as a token of the King's great heart. God never passes title to any part of his possessions; least of all, to the life he grants. He gives us the use, but he holds the title.

Life a crown land—have you thought of it thus? A patch of our Father's wide domain? A bit of immortality on which to try our fidelity and skill? A few acres in which to grow either wheat or tares, either apples of Sodom or "fruits of the Spirit"? What we grow in the crown land declares the sort of leaseholders we are. You who would be scrupulously true to the entrustment of a hundred dollars, or a keepsake, or the good name of your friend, how about your fidelity to the highest trust of all?

Life is a treasure for investment. 'Tis never enough to keep it; you cannot, in any adequate sense, keep it unless you invest it.

Life poorly invested, life spent in pleasure and vanity and commerce only, is but a step removed from life uninvested. God insists that we put life to the maximum, and, particularly, to the holiest use. He demands the fullest return, both for his sake and for our own.

Merely to earn dollars for yourself, with your commercial talent; merely to win popularity when you might be winning hearts to your Lord; merely to get through the world with a good name and clean record, when there is so much kingdom work to be done; merely to "dream and drift" when you might, if you would, dream and drive—this is a tragedy for the soul. Sang Browning once: "I count life just the stuff to try the soul's strength on." We cannot justly try our strength on easy tasks. To thy best, to thy best! Insist that your life be so invested as to yield the maximum return. Only so can you hope to hear the divine "Well done."—Condensed from Trustees of Life, by George Clarke Peck.

Stewardship Sermons. Each generation makes some transforming discovery in God's Book; what is "Stewardship" but God's word for this generation?

Jesus teaches that a man's attitude to the kingdom of God is revealed by his attitude to his property.

Stewardship puts the Golden Rule in business in place of the Rule of Gold.

Not how much of my money must I give to God, but how much need I use for myself.

Give, not from the top of your purse, but from the bottom of your heart.

To have is to owe, not to own.—United Stewardship Council.

For Discussion. 1. The man with one talent. See Chapter VII of The Purpose and Use of Comfort, by Phillips Brooks.

2. The Christian life and the making of money. "One more revival, only one more is needed, the revival of Christian stewardship, the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the Kingdom of God will come in a day."—Horace Bushnell. See Chapters IV and V of The Christian Life in the Modern World, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How important is the home to the nation? 2. Are most parents of boys and girls in reform schools responsible for the guilt of their children? 3. Are housekeeping and homemaking synonymous terms? 4. How may parents provoke their children to wrath? 5. Are you easy to live with? 6. What standards would you set for the home?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A STEWARD

Beginning the Lesson. In a story about an eighteen-year-old girl named Fidelia, we are told that she hated being called "young Fidelia" to distinguish her from her aunt; she hated the quiet little village; and she hated doing the same dull, monotonous things day after day, where she "had no opportunities."

Then Aunt Fidelia decided to take a boarder for the summer, a Colonel Ashburn, whom her aunt had always known. At her first glimpse of the small, frail figure, Fidelia's heart sank, for she had hoped the boarder would be one who could tell her about the city. But when she saw the quick smile transfigure his wan face, she felt a sudden twinge of sympathy. Before long they had become good friends, and Fidelia told him about the things she hated and how much she wanted to go somewhere and really live. "Child," he said, "don't hate your name—it's a soldier's word, for it means fidelity. And don't you know that the bravest soldiers are always those that serve in lonely places? There are a score of people round here who are as brave as any soldier I ever met."

That was the first of many talks and of a deep friendship. Then one morning he went away. Three weeks later came word of his death. Then Fidelia realized that he had been fighting his last gallant battle. "He knew he was dying!" she cried. "The thought must have been with him all the time, and yet he was so kind—to every one! He opened my eyes to the greatness of life!"

Colonel Ashburn was following in the footsteps of his great Master. Jesus the Christ knew that his death was imminent, the thought of it must have been always with him during those last days, and yet he spent the time in opening his disciples' eyes to many things they had yet to learn. One of these lessons was about the duty of putting one's talents to their fullest use. He taught the lesson by a parable. Who will tell it?

The Law of the Universe. "That Scripture lesson you read this evening, Dr. Keble, about the talents, seems to me one of the most difficult passages in the whole

Bible," said Mrs. Barstow as she greeted the minister in front of the pulpit. "I can understand about the man with five talents getting five more, and the man with two talents getting two more, but it has always seemed to me that Christ was unspeakably harsh in ordering the taking away of the one talent from the man who had not invested it. The man was so modest about it; and, at least, he hadn't squandered the money."

"I think you misapprehend the way Christ gave the command," said the minister. "I don't think he spoke harshly or with feeling. He was not exactly commanding when he said, 'From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' He was merely stating a law of the universe. Nature is niggardly about her investments. She always recalls the uninvested talent. An abused power always vanishes. You can't hold it.

"Don't you remember the fishes in Mammoth Cave that the old geography told about? They were supposed to have had eyes at one time. But they didn't need them in the darkness of the cave; so nature took them away. They tell us that once the mistletoe used to strike roots into the ground, but when it became a parasite, sucking its life from the trees, it lost the power to assimilate raw food from the soil. Isn't there an illustration of this very law going on before us today in the fact that we can't see or hear with the keenness of the Indian? We don't need this keenness of sight and hearing as the Indian did; so nature has withdrawn the investment. There is no waste in the careful housekeeping of the Infinite.

"That is why it is so pathetic to hear men say that they have no capacity for spiritual things, or, as they put it, no genius for religion. They wish to imply by that a veiled criticism of God, or to show their superiority to churches and spiritual helps. As a matter of fact, they are condemning themselves. Every man once had spiritual capacities. When he says he hasn't them any longer he shows that he has let them die. Nature has recalled her investment, as Christ indicated is her method in the parable of the talents.—The Youth's Companion.

The One Talent Man. This is the peril of the one talented man. He is likely to say, as did the man in the parable: "I have so little to work with that it is scarcely worth while to work at all." This man mistakes in supposing that he had any option as to the disposal of his talent. It was his lord's money, and only entrusted to him. As an honest steward he was bound to follow out the instruction of the owner as to what should be done with it.

The reward is for the little people as well as for the mighty ones. Faithfulness alone is the ultimate test of success. The greeting of those who pass through the gates into the Celestial City is not, "Well done, illustrious servant," but, "Well done, thou faithful one; enter into the joy of thy Lord." It is not doing much but doing well, that counts in the great reckoning.

If you have buried your talent in the ground dig it up. The Lord wants you to put it into circulation for yourself, for others and supremely for him.—D. J. Burrell.

Hoarding is Losing. "'I will not give away my perfume,' said a rosebud, holding its pink petals tightly wrapped in their tiny green case. The other roses blossomed in splendor, and those who enjoyed their fragrance exclaimed at their beauty and sweetness; but the selfish bud shriveled and withered away unnoticed.

"'No, no,' said a little bird, 'I do not want to sing.' But when his brothers soared aloft on joyous wings, pouring out a flood of melody, making weary hearers forget sorrow and bless the singers, then the forlorn little bird was lonesome and ashamed. He tried to sing, but the power was gone; he could make only a harsh, shrill chirp.

"'If I give away my wavelets, I shall not have enough for myself,' said the brook. And it hoarded all its water in a hollow place, where it formed a stagnant, slimy pool.

"A boy who loved a fresh, wide-awake rose, a buoyant singing bird and a leaping, refreshing brooklet thought on these things, and said: 'If I would have, and would be, I must share all my goods with others.'"

"It is what we give that makes us what we are," says The Youth's Companion. "We name substances by the qualities which they impart rather than by those which they retain. We call a flower fragrant because it gives forth fragrance, and we deem that sweet which yields sweetness to others. The rose, which we call red, holds in its petals every color in the rainbow but one, and that is the red alone. The yellow gold absorbs all other shades, and we name its color from the one which it

gives forth. It has been remarked as strikingly appropriate that that which absorbs all colors and gives forth none should be called black, and should be counted the very emblem of evil, while that which unifies and gives back every color is the almost universal symbol of purity and goodness.

"Talents that we use are those that increase. Those that we hoard and bury are the ones that are taken from us. The love and service that we give enrich our own lives and those of others."

What It Means to Be a Steward. See the Topic for Young People and Adults.

Stewardship of Money. Do you know what proportion of the money which you have to spend is given to good causes? Some spend it all upon themselves. Others spend part upon their friends, but very little for the church, the poor, missions, and other agencies which need the help of every one.

There is a Jewish organization in Great Britain called The Keren Hayesod which is raising a fund for the creation of "a Jewish National Homeland in Palestine." They have issued a map of Palestine showing the land now possessed by the Jews, and on the reverse side the printed information closes with these words: "The Keren Hayesod demands support from every Jew." None of our organizations ever demand money from any one. Giving is a Christian grace. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," said Jesus. We are only stewards of our money, our talents, our time—our ability or possessions of any kind whatsoever; we are accountable for the use we make of them.

For the boy or girl who spends money freely for movies but grudgingly for church these observations of a twenty-five cent piece given in The Christian Evangelist have food for thought.

"I am not on speaking terms with the butcher.

"I am too small to buy a quart of ice cream.

"I am not large enough to purchase a box of candy.

"I am too small to buy a ticket to the movie.

"I am hardly fit for a tip, but when I go to church on Sunday I am 'some money.'"

Use or Lose. I must "grow in grace," or I shall lose what I have. And one principal way to make grace grow is to use it in good works. The Rabbis related that King Solomon's greatest treasure was a vase containing the Elixir of Life, a medicine so powerful that any one taking even the smallest amount would live forever. Accordingly, people from time to time would send to beg a little of the famous elixir, but the king would always refuse. His friends, when they became old, or ill, would beseech him to grant them if it were only ever so tiny a taste, but he would always excuse himself, saying that if he gave it to one, all would be asking for it, and there would be none left for himself. At last he lay on his own deathbed, and sent for his still unopened vase, thinking that he would take its contents and live forever. It was brought and opened, but in it was nothing. The elixir had vanished because it was not used; whereas had it been distributed freely, it would have increased more and more. So it is with the grace of God in our souls. The more we bestow it upon others, the more we shall have for ourselves.—McVeigh Harrison.

Sentence Sermons. All service ranks the same with God.—Browning.

"Whatever talents we have, those which we use are the ones that count."

"Giving is living," the angel said,
"To feed to the hungry sweet charities bread."
"And must I keep giving, and giving again?"
My selfish and querulous answer ran.
"Ah! No," said the Angel, his look pierced me through,
"Just give 'till the Master stops giving to you."—Edwin Markham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we know about the home life of Jesus as a Boy? 8. Why should you obey your parents? 3. How can you honor your parents? 4. How can a parent provoke his children to wrath? 5. What influence has your home upon your life outside the home? 6. What part does a boy or girl have in making a Christian home? 7. What can you do to make your home happier even than it is now?

LESSON VII—FEBRUARY 13

MAKING OUR HOMES CHRISTIAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Let us love one another: for love is of God. 1 John 4.7

LESSON Ephesians 5.25 to 6.4

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 13.1-7

EPHESIANS 5.25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; 26 that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, 27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: 29 for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; 30 because we are members of his body. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. 33 Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and *let* the wife *see* that she fear her husband.

6.1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), 3 that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS TO LOVE THEIR WIVES, 5.25-33. "Husbands," counsels Paul, "love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." Paul sets a high standard for a man's love for his wife when he declares that it should correspond to the self-sacrificing love of Christ for the church, that it should be capable of suffering and dying for her as Christ did for the church.

"Would we codify the laws that should reign in households, whose daily trangression annoys and mortifies us and degrades our household life, we must adorn every day with sacrifice. Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices" (Emerson).

Paul goes on to state the object of Christ's sacrificial death—the setting apart and consecration of the church by cleansing it of guilt by baptisms "in accordance with the divine promise (or, on the ground of the preachèd word of the Gospel)," with a view to its ultimate presentation to himself as a glorious church, holy, without spot or blemish. Even as Christ loved the church, so ought husbands to love their wives. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.

"Although the husband's love for his wife may be compared to what is called his love for himself, inasmuch as it leads him to regard her welfare as his own, and to feel all that concerns her as if it concerned himself, the two loves are certainly different in their essence. There is no emotion in self-love; it is the product of reason, not of feeling; and it is a 'law' of man's nature, not in the sense of obligation but in the sense that it necessarily belongs to a rational creature. The basis of conjugal love is altogether different, and is to be found, not in the rational part of man's nature, but in the affections. The love is reinforced by reflection, and made firm by the sense of duty; but it can never become a merely rational regard for another's happiness, as 'self-love' is for one's own" (T. K. Abbott).

For a wife is part of himself, and no man ever hated his own flesh, but cared for it even as Christ, of whose body we are members, cared for the church, is Paul's argument. "We are veritable parts of that body of which he is head, and this is the reason why he nourishes and cherishes the church. We are members of Christ's body as having the source of our spiritual being in him. The statement of our spiritual origin is expressed in terms like those used of the origin of our physical life" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

"That man cannot do anything for God in public places if his own home is devastated and broken up by the principle of rebellion against God. And if the influence a man is exerting on his family is an influence that scatters, that man is not with Christ" (G. Campbell Morgan).

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This quotation we meet first in Gen. 2.24 and again in Mt. 19.5 and Mk. 10.7, 8. "We are not to understand by this that a man's obligation to other relatives is cancelled upon his marriage, but only that this relation is to be preferred to all others, there being a nearer union between these two than between any others, that the man must rather leave any of those than his wife" (Matthew Henry).

"Every little while we have the question discussed, Is marriage a failure? Certainly a discouraging lot of them are tragic failures. It is claimed that ninety per cent of all children in our reform schools are the children of parents who are not living together. Two little boys were playing together in Newport last summer. One said: 'Hello; there goes my new papa.' 'Humph,' said the other, 'he's nothing; he was my papa once.' Marriage for money is a dead failure. Marriage in haste is a failure. Marriage to be dissolved when 'I'm tired of your company' is a failure. But marriage founded on true love, never" (Malcolm J. McLeod).

This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. "The sense is this: the truths of which I have spoken, the relation of husband and wife as one flesh, is a revelation of profound importance; but let me explain that, in speaking of it as I have done, my meaning is to direct your minds to that higher relation between Christ and his church, in its likeness to which lies its deepest significance" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

Nevertheless—to resume the practical point we are discussing—do each one of you fulfil your duty of loving your own wife as yourself. And as for the wife, let her fear, reverence, her husband.

> "Self-reverent each and reverencing each
> Distinct in individualities,
> But like each other ev'n as those who love" (Tennyson).

"The ideal of the Christian family, an ideal lovelier and happier than any which the world has ever known, is the direct creation of Christianity. 'Familia' to the ear of a Roman meant a despot who could kill his children when they were born; it meant matrons among whom virtue was rare, divorces frequent, remarriage easy, it meant children spectators from their infancy of insolence and cruelty, servility and sin. But the new faith, while it sanctioned the authority of parents, checked their despotism; it encircled the position of womanhood with all that was pure and divine and tender, in the names of mother and of wife. For families in which, like sheltered flowers, spring up all that is purest and sweetest in human lives; for marriage exalted to an almost sacramental dignity; for all that circle of heavenly blessings which result from a common self-sacrifice; in one word, for all that there is of divinity and sweetness in the one word Home; for this—to an extent which we can hardly realize—we are indebted to Christianity alone" (F. W. Farrar).

II. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TO OBEY THEIR PARENTS, 6.1-3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. In his letter to the Colossians Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." "The words, 'in the Lord,' suggest the spirit in which the obedience is to be rendered."

Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise): Ex. 20.12. Commentators are troubled over the use of this word first, since there is an implied promise attached to the second commandment. A satisfactory explanation given is that the words in the second commandment were regarded as descriptive of God's nature, and not as a definite promise. The promise of the fifth commandment, Paul adds, is: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

"Every child asks 'Why?' and the answer occasionally has to be, 'Because you must do as you are told.' Children cannot learn too early that obedience is the condition of happiness. But this mere obedience soon gives place to a higher motive. We obey our parents, not because we have to, but because we honor and love them, and should be sorry to grieve them" (R. Bruce Taylor).

III. THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO FORBEAR FROM IRRITATING THEIR CHILDREN, 6.4. "And ye fathers," as Paul next admonishes them, "provoke not your children to wrath," avoid injustice, harshness, unreasonableness or anything that will exasperate your children and lead them to disobedience and to withhold honor from you. "But instruct them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." "Let their training be a model of the divine methods."

"To keep a nation pure and strong is a task that is enough to stagger the stoutest heart. But to keep a family pure and strong is a possible task; and according to the biblical conception a nation is nothing but the aggregation of homes" (Ismar J. Perity).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Honor thy father and thy mother, 6.2. In Japan's history and drama the one great theme, which never fails to bring tears to the reader or spectator, is the devotion of a son to his mother. In China the most sacred of all duties is performed before the ancestral tablets. In India the "elders" of the village community demand and receive universal respect. Some day we of the West will emerge from the brashness and pertness which now makes us seem to the older peoples so familiar and untrained. Certainly when a nation has truly honored father and mother its days have been long in the land, as China and Egypt bear witness. When East and West clasp hands in a common Christian faith, our ceaseless striving for novelty will be finely supplemented by Eastern reverence for established institutions and ripened character.—W. H. P. Faunce, in Social Aspects of Foreign Missions.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Epistle to the Ephesians. This letter was written by Paul during his imprisonment at Rome. Although addressed especially to the church at Ephesus, it may have been a circular letter designed for all the churches in the Roman province of Asia of which Ephesus was the capital.

This Epistle is one of the most profound of Paul's writings. Chrysostom says that it is "overflowing with lofty thought and doctrines." "It is one of the sublimest compositions of man," are the words of Coleridge. "What gives it its peculiar majesty," a modern commentator notes, "is the way which it carries everything back to God himself, his will, his eternal purpose and counsel."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

A surprising number of parents are content to delegate to others duties which they only can rightly fulfil. To countless boys and girls home is merely the place where they have their meals and sleep at night. Countless parents do not know nor care what the recreations of their children are, where they get their social life. They do not concern themselves with their education, leaving that entirely to the schools, nor yet with their religious training, relegating that wholly to the church-schools. A discussion of the duties which, by virtue of being parents, the parents owe to their children, may well occupy the time today in classes of men or women, and the thought be left with them that, as Edgar A. Guest expresses it, "The biggest task man's ever had since life began has been to be the father of a little lad." The ultimate responsibility for the religious training of the children rests upon fathers and mothers in the home. Religion is more quickly caught than taught.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO MAKE OUR HOMES CHRISTIAN

Beginning the Lesson. James went with his mother to visit an aunt, and his mother, according to a newspaper account, was worried as to how he would behave. But to her surprise he was angelic during the whole visit—always did as he was told, and never misbehaved. As soon as he was home again, however, he was his natural self once more.

"Oh, James," his mother said, "you were so good while you were away. Why do you start misbehaving now?"

"What's home for?" asked James in pained surprise.

Do you not know homes where his idea of what a home is for seems to be held by husbands and wives as well as by children? What is Paul's counsel to husbands?

What Marriage Should Mean to a Husband. "A man who marries for the sake of what his wife can do for him is not doing what he ought to do for the woman he marries. That marriage, so far as he is concerned, begins as a failure, whatever it may come to be in time. A young man writes thoughtlessly to an acquaintance: 'I expect to take a better half. I need some one to help me. I hope this young lady will prove a prize to me.' The real question for that young man is whether he will prove a prize to the young lady. Marriage ought to mean to him a God-given opportunity for service to the woman he loves. To be one and not two, to live day by day the together life, instead of the apart lives; to cherish oneness of aim and faith and work; to give and not to get, in loving service each for the other,—that is marriage. A young man who thinks of marriage as anything less than this will be something far less than a prize to the woman he marries."

The Wife's Opportunity. There was a time in Principal Rainy's life when he was the best-hated man in Scotland, as Dr. George H. Morrison tells us in The British Weekly. Scarcely a week passed in which the newspapers had not some venomous attack upon him. And all the time neither in face nor temper did he show one trace of irritation, but carried himself with beautiful serenity. One day Dr. Whyte met him and said, "Rainy, I cannot understand you. How do you manage to keep serene like this, exposed to all these venomous attacks?" And Principal Rainy answered without a moment's pause, "Whyte, I'm very happy at home."

"The wounds were deep, but there were hands at home that were always pouring balm into the wounds; gentle, kindly ministers at home that mitigated and alleviated pain. In the perfect trust of little children, in their innocence and blessed ignorance, in the love of some one who is dear, who understands yet is always bright and hopeful, how many men have plucked up heart again, found the bitter pain of life alleviated, been strengthened for their battle with the world!"

The Divorce Evil. "Forty years ago there were forty divorces for every one hundred marriages in Japan. Now there are only ten. That is a victory of Christianity in Japan. So is the decrease of thirty per cent of convicts in prisons during the past ten years. But I understand that divorce cases are growing in the United States. We need your prayers for Japan, but we are going to pray for you, too."

Thus speaks Kagarwa, the noted preacher of Japan. Divorces in our country increased in eighteen years over one hundred and forty per cent, while our population increased only thirty per cent. There is one divorce in the United States to every seventy-five marriages. The divorce ratio to marriage in Great Britain is one to ninety-six, and in Canada one to one hundred and sixty-one. "Can we speak of the dominance of the Christian home in American society," Professor Ellwood asks, "when America has more divorces in a single year in proportion to its population than has such a pagan country as Japan, and more than all the rest of the Christian civilized nations put together? These figures show that there is something radically wrong about our home and family life."

Parental Responsibility. Professor M. V. O'Shea declares that the home is not a social center as it was formerly, and especially it is not a training school for youth. He deplores the fact that its members are not bound together as a result of service of various kinds for one another, as was true in an earlier day. A few years ago every one was expected to perform some service essential to the comfort and welfare of the family as a whole, but this is not the situation any longer in the typical American home, as most of what is consumed in the house is produced and prepared outside of it, and even such work as is performed in the home is done principally by machines of one sort or another. The children in the typical homes are relieved from the performance of any duties whatsoever.

As a consequence of this change in our home management, young people have much more leisure time at their disposal than young people had twenty-five years ago. And they are spending too much of that time in motion picture establishments, vaudeville theaters, dance halls and ballrooms. There are already evidences, Professor O'Shea finds, that a considerable portion of our young people are becoming nervously unstable and ethically and morally weakened so that they are not adapting themselves to present-day complex social conditions. "One can find in the

Old World plenty of illustrations of the fact that when the youth of any people abandon the conventions that encourage self-restraint and give themselves up to the pursuit of emotional excitement and gratification, the nation loses the capacity to meet the crises that are certain to occur as a people grows older. In Europe, once strong, competent, and well-controlled peoples are now declining or have passed out of the picture altogether. It seems to be universally true that when a people cannot keep youth simple, docile, and teachable long enough to gain self-control and to master knowledge that is necessary for the maintenance of physical and social stability and welfare, the people speedily degenerate. We are facing this very problem in our country today. It would not take long for us to come to a halt in our development, and even to begin to return in our course, if we, especially our young people, should continue the pace at which we are now going."

President Coolidge, in an address at the International Convention at Washington of the Y. M. C. A., expressed his conviction that what is needed more than anything else by the youth of America is greater home control through parental action. Shifting the responsibility of parents to other shoulders, he thought a serious matter. There could be no adequate substitute for the help to youth which God and nature has wisely provided. In a large proportion of homes the neglect of parental duties in the formation of character and habit he held to be responsible for a considerable part of the present increase in crime. He quoted reliable authorities who have declared that a startling proportion of the nation's outcasts and criminals have been found, upon investigation, to have been deprived in their early years of the priceless training of parental authority and oversight. "They are refugees from broken homes." The home he declared to be "the Nation's Cornerstone," and urged that "better homes" movement begin with the training of youth for responsibilities as future heads of homes.

Provoke not your Children to Wrath. "Limit not thy children to thine own idea; they were born in a different time," says the Talmud. A Chinese philosopher wrote, "We only keep that which we set free." The parent must expect to see the gradual emancipation of the child from parental authority, confident that if obedience has been taught in early childhood, and that if a good parental example has been set, without deceit, concealment, or hypocrisy, the chances are extremely good for the avoidance of shipwreck.

Parents should know how antagonism and conflicts set in. So often parents attract to themselves personally the odium that might properly belong to something else. A boy objects to a white collar, a girl wishes to stay all night with a girl friend; the parent enforces his will just because it is his. A better way would be for parents to group themselves together and work for certain standards of behavior in all boys and girls. Children will follow accepted social standards, where they resent what they imagine is an arbitrary ruling of an autocratic parent. Much misery of family life would be avoided if the system of individual control would include a group sanction. For example, all the mothers of a certain high school recently went on record against unchaperoned parties and automobile rides. Parents should pool their responsibilities.

Other sources of antagonism are broken promises, neglect, injustice, constant nagging, narrowness, difference in behavior codes about trifles, and the sense of possession on the part of parents. These apparently slight matters lead to definite and tragic breaks, many of which would be avoided by an adroit common sense.—Miriam Van Waters.

Nurture Your Children in the Chastening and Admonition of the Lord. The best and most natural way for the child to enter into his spiritual heritage is to grow into it gradually from the beginning.

Only those ideals which have been built into the structure of character from childhood later become a dynamic and dependable factor in the life.

Spiritual ideals, loyalties, devotions and the consciousness of God in the life cannot come in a day. They are the products of wise, persistent training in religion through the plastic years.

Religion can and must be taught. In his religious development the child uses the same powers of mind and heart that are employed in other avenues of experience.

The new program of religious education does not substitute mere training for the divine influence working on the life. It offers a way to prevent the soul of the child from ever breaking connections with the divine.—C. E. Betts, in The New Program of Religious Education.

A Code of Conduct for Parents. Don't show off your child. It is not the duty of the child to feed a parent's vanity, but the parent's task to forget self-pride in dealing with his child.

Don't hurry your child. Adulthood is not a station towards which the child should be rushed, but a product of growth, and the growing process is the important thing. You can't mold children: they have to grow.

Don't use your child as a means of ridding yourself of emotions that you dare not express to equals.

Don't expect commands to function in place of fellowship. Children can be led but not driven in these days.

Don't lie to your child or permit any one else to do so.

Don't use fear as a whip. Fear can only succeed by making slaves, and slaves, even when obedient, are poor substitutes for full human beings.

Don't stress the weaknesses of your child. He may take seriously what you point out to him and develop feelings of inferiority, or he may glue his attention on your own weaknesses and lose respect for you as a harping hypocrite.

Don't tell your child that he cannot reason. He can and will if you have the wit to help him.

Don't let your home crowd out your child; put the child first and adjust home life to his needs.

Don't be a tyrant to your child even if you have power. Children are helpless and long-suffering and usually generous in their judgment of parents. Nevertheless, a parent who drives his child from sheer love of dominance runs risk of soon losing the child's love. The child will sometime be free, but the parent lonely.—Ernest R. Grover in The Christian Advocate.

For Discussion. 1. Do you agree with Rabbi Adler that the most serious question before the American public today is not the industrial nor the international question, but the question of the home?

2. The Christian ideal of the family. See Chapter VIII of Christian Citizenship, by Francis J. McConnell.

3. "Home must be a place where not only our body but our soul is at ease."

4. It is good to remember that your living with others may be just as hard for the others.—Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the church? 2. Is the church essential today? 3. Why should one become a church member? 4. What does a member owe to his church? 5. Is your minister carrying burdens which should be shifted to the shoulders of members? 6. Is your church in need of any definite service just now which you can render?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE CHRISTIAN IN THE HOME

Beginning the Lesson. What does Paul say is the children's duty to their parents? Which commandment does he quote? Does obedience honor parents? In what other ways may one honor them? What does Paul say are the parents' duties to the children? What does he mean by "Provoke not your children to wrath"? What makes a happy home?

How to Master the Difficult Art of Obedience. Jesus as a child was subject unto his parents. To be obedient is to be subject, and to be subject is what? If you take hold of the word *subject* at both ends and pull hard you will pull it in two. In the one hand you will have the little word "sub," which everybody knows means "under." New Yorkers call their tunnels "subways," because they run under all the other ways on Manhattan Island. In the other hand you will have a piece of a Latin word which means to place or lay or throw or bring. So that when Luke says Jesus was subject to his parents, he means that Jesus laid himself under their authority and dominion and control.

The word in the Greek Testament tells us that Jesus was *habitually* subject, he was subject right along, all the time, without ceasing. His subjection was not spasmodic or intermittent or occasional, but it was a continuous and settled habit of his life. From day to day and from year to year he laid himself down under the dominion of his parents.

When Paul writes to the children of Asia Minor he says, "Children, obey your

parents," and that letter "s" is one of the important letters in the Bible. I have read of boys who evidently did not know the "s" is there. They made a distinction between their father and their mother; their ears were attentive to their father's voice, but, strange to say, they could not hear their mother. But all such boys are unlike the Boy Jesus. When his parents spoke he listened, and when they commanded he obeyed.

Obedience is a part of education, and if a boy or girl does not learn the habit of obedience he or she is not educated, even though they may read many languages and be experts in science and mathematics. Boys and girls who do not learn at home the virtue of obedience are unfortunate. For unless children learn in the home, they are not likely to learn it anywhere, and a man or woman who is self-willed, incapable of obeying, is never happy, and is often mischievous if not dangerous.

No one makes a good citizen who does not obey the laws. What a lovely country this would be if all people were obedient: no jails, no prisons, no penetentiaries anywhere. And what a deal of misery and suffering we should be spared if all men and women in America had been taught when children to reverence laws and been trained to habits of obedience. Our flag is not a beautiful flag unless it floats over the heads of law-keeping men and women; and the very foundations of our Republic are shaken when any class of men, high or low, defy their country's laws.

Saul of Tarsus was one of the strongest men who ever lived. He was a mental giant. He gave himself to Jesus unreservedly, and in doing this he was able to say, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." If you want to be obedient, pray to God to help you.

Give yourself to Jesus, the only perfectly obedient man our world has ever known. It is by following his example and drinking in his spirit and relying on his promises that you will be able to master, little by little, with many a slip and failure, but with ever-increasing confidence and success, the high and difficult art of obeying.—Condensed from My Master's Business, by C. E. Jefferson.

The Christian in the Home. Which is easier, to be a Christian at church or at home? At a social gathering or at home? Among friends or among brothers and sisters? Among strangers or with parents? For whose love do you care more, your sister's or a friend's? For whose good opinion do you care more, your mother's or a stranger's? The sad fact is, that we are often at our worst among those whom we love best. Why is it so hard to be a Christian at home?

The story of St. Simeon Stylites, who attained a reputation for holiness by dressing in a hair shirt and living for years on the top of a high pillar, spending his time in prayer, greatly impressed the imagination of young Anatole of France. He wished to emulate that saint, and not being able to secure the pillar, he improvised one by placing a chair on the kitchen table. Arrayed in something almost as uncomfortable as a hair shirt, he took his seat there, ready to spend the rest of his days in fasting and prayer. Unfortunately, however, the cook and the rest of his family were unable to understand the sublimity of his purpose, and they made life so disagreeable to him that he was obliged to give up his project. "Then," he writes, "I perceived that it is a very difficult thing to be a saint while living with your own family. I saw why St. Anthony and St. Jerome went into the desert."

The Youth's Companion observes: "It would seem that the family ought to be the easiest place in the world to be 'saintly.' Curiously enough, it is generally found to be the most difficult. It is easier to restrain your temper at a party than at home. It is easier to be courteous at a reception than in the family circle. It is less difficult to show thoughtfulness and nice consideration for others at a dinner party than it is to do the same at the family breakfast table.

"But it means vastly more to do these same things at home. In reality, it is pretty contemptible to show a pleasant side abroad, and a disagreeable side within the home. It does not mean very much to be agreeable when people are watching us. It does mean something in the privacy of home. It is a beautiful thing to see young boys very considerate for some particularly pretty girl, and ready to run any errand for some attractive teacher; it is a great deal more beautiful to see them show that same consideration for their own mothers.

"It is harder to be 'saintly' in our own homes, and yet the day will come when it will not matter to us what the people outside are thinking of us; some day we shall wish more than we wish for anything else on earth, that we had the members

of our own families together once more, so that we might be kind to them and thoughtful for them, and show them how dearly we loved them. As surely as we live, that day will come. Why not obtain that wish now?"

Being Good Friends with One's Family. I have been wondering why it is so fatally easy to be cross to those we love. All of us are comparatively gracious and considerate and courteous to the peope we meet just once in a while, but it seems to take an almost superhuman power to "keep sweet" at home. I don't know why it is so, but I know that it is; it's one of the things like sunlight and gravity that evade explanation. The only sensible thing to do is to accept the truth, that being good friends with one's family is a hard thing to do—and then decide you are going to do it!

Have you ever wondered what Jesus Christ meant when he said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household"? Like the Jews, I used to say to myself, "This is a hard saying; my father, my sisters, my brothers—foes?" But I think I have come to understand what he means. Our dear home people are not consciously and willingly our foes; but in the very nature of close association they, more often than any one else, threaten that life of inner tranquillity which we all so long to live. But have you ever noticed that Christ never stops with "a hard saying"? He said also, "Love your enemies," your foes, and I think he meant love most those who tempt you most, this same family of yours.

Drummond, in his analysis of love, gives as one of its elements, courtesy. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself if you are always really courteous at home? Several years ago an adorable little three-year-old came to spend a month with us. One morning when my sister was in a great hurry she called, "Lester, will you please bring my bag down to me?—there's a dear!" Though he was only half-dressed, he clattered down the stairs with the bag, and after she had taken it, stood watching her, big-eyed and judicial. After a moment he spoke, "What does 'oo say to me when me bwings 'oo 'oor bag?" I have never heard a more embarrassed "Thank you."

But there is more to courtesy than the please and thank you part. And the more lies somewhere in the fine old meaning of the word courtesy, the doings of the people of the court, the people who knew most and thought most and loved most—in a word, lived most. For courtesy is an active thing! Sometimes it consists of remembering, sometimes of getting yourself out of the way altogether, sometimes of "putting yourself in the other fellow's place." We are apt to think of this active side of courtesy as doing things for people, giving, and of course it includes all that. But somehow, real courtesy seems to me to lie more in the sharing of what is hard to share—yourself.

For families, the active side of courtesy lies in what I love to think of as the cultivation of togetherness. For togetherness is a plant, and if you tend it carefully in that home of yours, it will grow.

As you cultivate mutual interests they will surprise you by flowering out into all sorts of beautiful things. For the Togetherness Plant is hardy. Like a scarlet geranium on the window sill, it cheers the passer-by almost as much as those within. So, if community service means anything to you, don't neglect the Togetherness Plant!—Condensed from a Booklet by Alice M. Colter.

Sentence Sermons. "If the homes are happy the world is happy."

No service for God is of any value which is contradicted by the life in the home.—G. Campbell Morgan.

If your father and mother, your sister and brother, if the very cat and dog in the house, are not happier for your being a Christian, it is a question whether you really are one.—J. Hudson Taylor.

> A house is built of bricks and stones, of sills and posts and piers;
> But a home is built of loving deeds that stand a thousand years.
> —Nixon Waterman.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what words did Jesus tell his disciples that privilege means responsibility? 2. What should followers of Christ do? 3. What are some of the things which members of the early church did? 4. Which of them should we do? 5. What was the custom of Jesus in regard to attending the synagogue services? 6. Did he need their help? 7. Why did he identify himself with others there? 8. What help for our daily living comes from going to church? 9. What can you do to help the church?

SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH

GOLDEN TEXT: We are God's fellow-workers. 1 Corinthians 3.9

LESSON Matthew 5.13-16; Acts 2.42-47 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Ephesians 3.14-21

MATTHEW 5.13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. 16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

ACTS 2.42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. 46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISCIPLES, Mt. 5.13-16. "Ye are the salt of the earth," Jesus declared. Salt was used in sacrifice by Jews, Greeks, and Romans, and was an emblem of purity and of the influence of a holy life upon others. Salt preserves from corruption; Jesus was reminding his disciples that it was their duty to keep others from moral corruption.

"Fearlessly to speak the words which bear witness to righteousness and truth and purity; patiently to do the deeds which strengthen virtue and kindle hope in your fellowmen; generously to lend a hand to those who are trying to climb upward; faithfully to give your support and your personal help to the efforts which are making to elevate and purify the social life of the world—that is what it means to have salt in your character" (Henry van Dyke).

"But," continued Jesus, "if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" They must beware lest they lose their Christian character and become as useless in his Kingdom as salt that has become good for nothing and is cast out upon the ground and trodden under foot of men. That this was no mere figure of speech, Dr. Thompson shows: see Light from Oriental Life.

"Christ was giving a clear and powerful call to duty. His thought was not that his disciples should congratulate themselves on being better than other men. He wished them to ask themselves whether they actually had in them the purpose and the power to make other men better. Did they intend to exercise a purifying, seasoning, saving influence in the world? Were they going to make their presence felt on earth and felt for good? If not, they would be failures and frauds. The savor would be out of them" (Henry van Dyke).

"Ye are the light of the world."

But Christ is the great Light of the world from whom his disciples receive their light. And as Phillips Brooks reminds us, the soul must stand in the sunlight to bear witness to the sun.

The disciples were conspicuous witnesses for him, comparable to a city built upon a hill which could not be hid. Then Jesus emphasized his thought by another reference, this time to utensils common to every house, the lamp and the bushel. The bushel served various purposes besides that of a measure. It was the table around which the family gathered, and on top of it, not under it, the lamp was placed. "Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand," said Jesus; "and it shineth unto all that are in the house."

"The next time you hear some one trying to prove that a Christian can be a true follower of Christ without saying so, just think of that poor, dis-

couraged, lonely lamp flickering its life out under the cover of a bushel measure. If you are under a bushel be sure that Christ never put you there; you crawled there yourself" (C. E. Jefferson).

"Even so (like the city set on a hill or the lamp put on top of the stand) let your light shine before men." "Light will shine unless it be extinguished or covered. Christ did not say, Generate an illuminant. He said, 'Shine, you have the light, do not hide it.' His actual words were, 'Let the light of you shine.' That phrase, 'the light of you,' meant the light which has come to you, the light which has entered into you, the light which has enlightened you, the light which is now within you" (G. Campbell Morgan).

And the purpose of that shining, as Bengel long ago emphasized, is not that they may see you, but that they may see your good works, and recognizing their source, may "glorify your Father who is in heaven." "Admit and then transmit the light of God in Christ" (Andrew Murray).

The religious papers record the story of a woman who went to a religious conference in the hope of attaining joy and peace in God. Eagerly she prayed that there she might learn the way. She saw a face there which expressed all that she longed for. Day after day she watched that face, and always found the same serenity and glory. She went home praising God that he had answered her prayer by showing her a living example of his power. This she wrote the man who had so impressed her, a man whom failing health had forced to give up active Christian work, and to him it was a great joy that his light still shone so as to glorify his Father. Recall Shakespeare's words:—

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,—
Not light them for themselves. For if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not."

II. LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH, Acts 2.42-47. All those who at Pentecost were led to believe in Christ became faithful members of the Christian community. They were steadfast in their attention to the teaching of the apostles, lived with wonderful unity and comradeship with all, and shared in the breaking of bread and in the public prayers. The "breaking of bread" refers to the blessing which was uttered at the beginning of a meal when the bread, which was in the form of thin, flat cakes, was solemnly broken for distribution. Our word "fellowship" is rich in suggestiveness. Its simplest meaning is "companionship" and "companion" comes from two Latin words, *con,* with, together, and *panis,* bread; so that literally a companion is one with whom we eat bread. Thus it is a fitting word to apply to church associates, those who eat together the bread of the Lord's Table.

"The efficient churchman realizes that he has a responsibility for the other men and women who with him are a part of the church's life. He must so live and work that because of his presence the church is a help and not a hindrance to the other people who belong to it.

What kind of church would this church be
If all its members were just like we?

is a question which he frequently asks himself. He knows that some of the members will be inclined to become just like him. He knows that the very atmosphere of his life will help to make up the meaning of the church to many another member, and the thought of making the church a place of deeper beauty and power in the lives of all is with him every day" (Lynn Harold Hough).

At first the followers of Christ made no effort to form any ecclesiastical organization. All that believed were together. They met in private houses, they used the Psalms for praise, they repeated the Lord's Prayer, and they met frequently, probably weekly, to partake of the Lord's Supper, which was followed by a church supper, partly for its social fellowship, and partly to provide food for those in need. The one condition of their fellowship was love and loyalty to the Master; they lived without friction and vainglory, in an absolute, equal brotherhood. The rich shared with the poor, selling their possessions for this purpose as there was need.

Communism has been often tried but has never proved successful. These early

Christians were not communists, but they acted under the urge of a fine community spirit, realizing that they were God's stewards and that their wealth was to be used for others as well as for themselves.

No one ought to have everything until every one has something.

They took their food with gladness and thanksgiving. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

"The efficient churchman realizes that the church is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of God's kingdom. He believes that every Christian should be an evangelist. Every Christian should be winning others for Jesus Christ; every Christian should be leading others to the place where in a vital personal way they accept Jesus as Savior and Lord" (Lynn Harold Hough).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

If the salt have lost its savor, Mt. 5.13. Rock salt is now obtained by the Arabs at Jebel Usdum, or Salt-Mountain, at the southern end of the Dead Sea. Sometimes a large proportion of the salt carried away is earthy matter, and when the salt is dissolved this earthy matter remains, insoluble and destitute of the savor of salt.

It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men, Mt. 5.13. A merchant of Sidon, having farmed of the government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over a great quantity from the marshes of Cyprus—enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for many years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the government out of some small percentage of duty. Sixty-five houses were rented and filled with salt. Such houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the road to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was "good for nothing."—William H. Thompson, in The Land and the Book.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did our second lesson text say about giving? Two weeks ago we saw that a Christian had much to give besides money: what are some of his talents? For whom should they be used? What did we learn last week about our duty of bearing witness to the Light of the world?

The Background of Mt. 5.13-16. In the Sermon on the Mount, as we call the long address in Matthew, chapters 5-7, Matthew groups together many of the words of Jesus to his disciples. Our text gives his words in regard to the influence and responsibility of disciples, who are so well equipped for service in his Kingdom.

It has often been suggested that from the Horns of Hattin, where the Sermon on the Mount has been localized, Jesus may have pointed as he spoke to Safed, a conspicuous hill-top city which could not be hid.

The Background of Acts 2.42-47. After recording the events of Pentecost, Peter's sermon, and its result in adding three thousand to the little group of followers of Christ, Luke records in these verses the way in which the Christian community lived at Jerusalem.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 Corinthians 12.1-31; 1 Thessalonians 4.9-12; 5.12-15.

The series of lessons which we are studying this Quarter, taken here and there from the New Testament, are studies in the Christian Life, and the aim set before us is to discover, through a study of the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles, the Christian way of living in our day. Let us not forget our aim. Let us not spend so much time in developing the text as to have none remaining for the application of its lesson to "The Christian way of living in our day." The *emphasis* of your teaching today should not be upon the way the early Christians lived and worked in the church, but upon the opportunities before your pupils today for service in the church.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LIVING AND WORKING IN THE CHURCH

Beginning the Lesson. What did Jesus mean by calling his followers the salt of the earth? What was their mission in life? What did he mean by calling them the light of the world? Whence had they received their light? How were they to use it?

You Are All Lamplighters. I was sitting in the gloamin', an' a man passed the window. He was the lamplighter. He pushed his pole into the lamp and lighted it. Then he went to another and another. Now, I couldna' see him. But I knew where he was by the lights as they broke out doon the street, until he had left a beautiful avenue of light.

Ye're a' lamplighters. They'll know where ye've been by the lights. Ye'll want your son to be a noble man. Let him say wi' pride when you've passed on: "Ma faither lit that lamp."

The first burst of light that the world had was the lamp lit by Jesus, or rather he was the light himself. He said truly, "I am the Light of the world." Ye're in his succession. Be careful how ye bear yoursel's.—Harry Lauder.

Working in the Church. What were the activities of the early church? Who shared in these activities? How were they equipped for the work? How did they let their light shine? Who has charge of our church finances? How many members contribute generously? What charities do we maintain? Who manages them? What home and foreign missionary work is carried on, and by whom? How many people are responsible for the Bible-school work? Who leads in the religious work of the church? What part in all these activities does our class have? Are we doing all we can?

All That Believed. The Master's great test question was, "Lovest thou me?" and his supreme command was, "Follow me." No one was fit for candidacy in his Kingdom who could not give satisfactory response to these questions. Love and devotion to himself was all that Jesus asked of those who came to him seeking to associate themselves with his cause.

Today the Church has changed the emphasis from a personal love to Christ to an intellectual assent to certain theological and metaphysical statements about his person. In other words, the tendency has been to substitute a creed for a Christ. And the result is that there are multitudes in the Church who on occasion are ready to grow warm in defense of a particular form of creed or confession, in whose lives there is very little evidence of the Spirit of Jesus, and who are not willing to make any real sacrifice for his sake. Until the Church puts love and devotion to a personal Savior as the supreme qualification for membership in her communion, we can never hope for the fruits which we have a right to expect from such an association of believers. We have no right to go beyond the Master's test in our requirement of those who seek the fellowship of his people. But the Church has a right and an imperative obligation to challenge those who knock at her door for admission as to their love and loyalty to him whose presence alone constitutes a living Church.—From an Editorial in The New Outlook of Canada.

Social Worship or Private Devotion? Individual worship in the secret places of the heart is indeed essential to all true religion; but experience shows that when individuals come together and become a worshiping community, new spiritual levels are reached, new values are created, new powers released. No function of consciousness remains precisely the same when others are present as when the individual is alone. Social worship adds new depth and meaning to the experience of God. It is not a substitute for private devotion any more than opinions of one's social group are a substitute for one's conscience or intelligence. But through social worship love is made more sacred, the feeling of unity with our fellow creatures becomes more vivid and binding, and the fact that God is God of all is more adequately expressed than through any private worship. Hence he who seeks to be religious apart from the worshiping congregation of the church is surrendering more than he can well afford to lose.—Edgar Sheffield, in Religious Values.

Obligations of Church Members. In many churches names are added to the roll with very little understanding on the part of their owners as to the obligations they are assuming. The significance of membership in the church is not made clear to them. An invitation from the pastor, followed by a few words of kindly urging,

has gained their willingness to unite with the church. They have given no thought to the obligations of church membership.

"Most churches we have known have been like merchant ships with far too small a crew and far too many passengers," declares an editorial in The Congregationalist. "Are you merely a passenger in your own church ship? Have you disowned responsibility and neglected service? Does the minister pray and the choir sing for you, while you sit with folded hands? Is there no place in the activities of the church where a man or woman of about your height and weight and brains and social standing might be of use?"

One Man's Idea of Church Membership. Some one quotes the following dialogue between Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, a New York Episcopal minister, and a man who came to him saying that he wished to join the former's church.

"Very well, we will be glad to have you. Into what department of the church work will you come?"

"Oh, I don't care to go into any department of work, I just want to join your church."

"Well, now, we have all our members divided into different departments. There is the Sunday-school work, the parish work, visiting the sick and poor. We all enter some of these branches and go to work."

"But I just want to join the church, and do not care particularly about joining any one division."

"Ah, you are not looking for our church. You should go around the corner to the other street, and join the Church of the Heavenly Rest."

What Is the Church Today? The church is the School of Christ where men and women who wish to follow him come together to be trained by him in Christian character for Christian service. The building in which they meet is not a social clubroom; it is designed to be a spiritual "Power House" where they shall be charged with the spirit of love, service, and sacrifice for all men and all society. It is perfectly true that this ideal is far from realization in most of our churches, but that is equally true of all human organizations, and it must be admitted by those who know the facts that more churches are striving toward their ideal today than ever before.

The church is the only institution on earth today that stands to affirm the existence, and insists on the culture, of the human soul. As the spire lifts its finger to heaven, so the church points men to God, and cries, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It utters the words of Christ to men of this country. It says, "Ye cannot live by bread alone." "The life is more than meat." "The soul is greater than the body." It stands for eternal things and urges men to keep eternity's values in view. With Browning it cries, "Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure."

The church is in a very special and peculiar sense the place of worship. Some men are, as Beecher said, "like the Southern pine, so full of rich, fire-loving substance they can burn themselves, and act as a torch, but the great mass of mankind need to be treated like fuel in a fireplace, stick upon stick, many and many together, that in the common heat and the common flame they may all glow." The church is the place of special communion with God, where many hearts take fire and kindle each other in a flame of true worship.

The church is the great training-ground of moral character. It stands for the regeneration of society.—Condensed from a Sermon by A. E. Cooke.

A Broad Conception of Church Work. Church work now stands for an act or series of acts in connection with a special building or society. To teach in a class in Sunday-school, to twine evergreens for Christmas decorations, to collect funds for a missionary society, to visit the sick in the parish, is considered "Church work." This view separates church work from everyday life. To help save the world in any way should be considered church work. The church is a group of men and women who associate in the love and service of Jesus Christ. At stated times the group meets for instruction and inspiration. But the members of the group are just as much church members when they leave the church building as when they enter. If we interpreted the term "church work" more broadly it would carry the religious spirit into the secular life. Church work should be the endeavor to apply the teaching of Jesus Christ to each duty and to each relationship.—Josiah Strong, in Studies in Social Christianity.

Young People and Church Attendance. The new converts at Jerusalem, we read, continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. Out of fifty young people who joined a church one year all but one have loyally attended at least one service every Sunday. The pastor talked with each one before his admission and emphasized three requirements, a true Christian life, loyalty to the services of worship, financial responsibility to the church.

"The first consideration is not, 'How can we get the young people to our services?'" a successful pastor declares, "but, 'How can our services help meet the life needs of youth?'" He finds the far greater number of young people think the young people's society is theirs, the Church-school belongs to them in lesser degree, but the church services are intended for adults. To change their attitude toward the church he advocates giving them a share in the church work, inviting them to membership on important boards and committees of the church. "Why not?" he asks; "who owns the church?"

Where this plan was tried a high school girl said: "We begin to understand the viewpoint of the older folks. So all of us join in the whole work of the church because we know one another better and are interested in all that goes on." "As a matter of fact, in no few cases the older people simply tolerate youth. There is no desire to have young people share the life of the church except upon terms of silence and of becoming adult before their time. The answer to the query as to who owns the church frequently is that the kitchen committee owns it, or the janitor owns it, or the church board owns it. Instead of making it easy for boys and girls to center their activity in the church, it is made well-nigh impossible for active adolescents to use the church property. Rules made years ago are regarded as more sacred than the lives of the children of the community. Adults who look forward to having children of their own must expect sleepless nights, broken dishes, a drain on their pocket-books. A church which expects to build Christian character in the youth of the community, under church auspices, must be willing to pay for broken chairs in order to avoid broken lives."

The Work of Unofficial Members. What will enable a church to attain the maximum success possible with its particular environment and equipment? Leadership it needs, but leadership unsupported is impotent. Earnest lieutenants are essential, but no commander and his staff ever won a battle by themselves. Thorough organization, with numerous capable committees, is an asset, but inadequate. Not as a substitute, but supplementary to these, unofficial efficiency is needed.

A church having only organized efficiency suffers from a serious deficiency. The larger it is, the more true this is. In a church of twenty members an office exists for almost every one; but in a church of two hundred members, while a score may hold office and as many more serve on important committees, four-fifths are in the unofficial class, and in a church of a thousand members nearly nine-tenths are.

Unofficial efforts at times have an efficiency surpassing that of the corresponding official acts. A newcomer to a church complained that he had not been hospitably received. When reminded that the minister had repeatedly welcomed him at the church and had called on him, he acknowledged it but said that the people had not greeted him. Surprise was expressed that the ushers, usually very careful, had missed him. Then he confessed that they had shaken hands with him cordially, but, he said, that was their business and it did not satisfy him. He wanted unofficial hospitality and, however unreasonable he may seem, most of us will acknowledge that in visiting other churches it is the informal, spontaneous cordiality that impresses us more than any official welcome.

The area for unofficial effort will vary with the church, its condition, and environment. It may be reporting the sick, the afflicted, the strangers, the "good prospects" for membership in the Bible school or some other organization; or calling to welcome, or comfort, or cheer, or congratulate; it may be bringing people to the church, or taking its message to them, or asking them to join the church, or leading them to accept Christ; it may be some civic duty; it may be intercessory prayer.—Condensed from an article in The Congregational, by Edwin H. Byington.

For Discussion. 1. Jesus and the church. See Chapter IX of The Principles of Jesus, by Robert E. Speer; Chapter XVII of The Life That Really Is, by Lyman Abbott.

2. The Christian life and the Christian church. See Chapter VII of The Christian Life in the Modern World, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is meant

by "flesh" and by "Spirit" as used by Paul in this letter? 2. Are Christians governed by law or by love? 3. Is it possible to manifest in business the fruit of the Spirit here enumerated? 4. What duty has the church in regard to making the community Christian? 5. What can our class do to help make our community temperate?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE MEANING OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. You remember that Jesus once said of himself, "I am the Light of the world," and here in our text from Matthew he said to the disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." They had received their lesser lights from him, the great Light. Just as the moon shines only by the light of the sun, which it reflects, so the disciples could shine only by the light which they could reflect from their knowledge of Jesus.

Let your Light Shine. In England in early times lighted lanterns were hung in some of the church steeples at night, and others in front of dwelling houses. The watchman going his rounds called out, "Hang out your lights!" and this is the call of Christ, Let your lights shine, let the world know by your actions and words that you are my follower. An unlighted lantern hung out in those days of old was as effective in guiding a traveler along the road as is many a one in these days who has taken the name of Christian and yet is unlighted. A follower of Christ who is not making his presence felt for good is a failure.

A Chinese student in the University of Peking, who was studying English under Professor King, purchased a copy of the New Testament with the English and Chinese printed in parallel columns. "I want to study the Book," he explained, "because Professor King is so different from the Chinese teachers. He seems to love his pupils. He sympathizes with them, never becomes impatient when they are stupid, and his conduct and language show that he possesses something that I never knew a Chinese teacher to possess, and I do not know where he gets it unless from the Bible." Professor King's light was shining, and it was leading others to the Light of the world.

Shine Just Where You Are.

Don't spurn to be a rushlight
  Because you are not a star,
But brighten some bit of darkness
  By shining just where you are.

There is need of the tiniest candle
  As well as the garish sun;
The humblest deed is ennobled
  When it is worthily done.

You may never be called to brighten
  The darkest regions afar;
So, fill for the day your mission
  By shining just where you are.—John Hay.

Your Light. In a village where only a few central squares were lighted, three children were on their way to the post office after dark. James could walk easily by means of a flashlight which he kept shining down before him, but it gave almost no light to the two younger children.

"James," called his sister after falling several times, "I think you ought to hold the light so that we can see, too! You are using it all for yourself."

"This is my flashlight. Father gave it to me on my last birthday. Didn't you hear him tell me to take along *my* flashlight?"

"Yes," said the sister, "it is your flashlight, but I am sure father meant you to light the path for all of us. It would still be your flashlight if you held it so we could all see the path. I think you could see even better if you would make it shine ahead instead of right down on your own feet."

James turned the light ahead, and found that it made better walking for himself. So they went to the post office and returned in comfort and safety because the brother had let his light shine so that the others might see.

"How many there are in the world who, because they have received some gift from the Heavenly Father, selfishly suppose that it was meant to be used only for their own pleasure and benefit!" the Youth's Companion comments. "Some who

receive a legacy of money spend it all foolishly. Some who have keen minds given them use their minds not for the good of their fellow men but for devising means by which they may gain at the expense of others. Some who have had the opportunity to gain a good education use it, not in leading others into a higher and better life, but in taking advantage of others who have not been so blessed in life. *Your* light, you say, to use as you wish! Yes, your light, true enough; but how much more it would mean to you as well as to others if you used it as the Giver meant you to use it.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Letting their Light Shine in the Early Church. See Explanations and Comments.

The Meaning of Church Membership. See the previous topic.

Don't Be a Slacker. Some young people are slackers. They never consider that they are responsible for any part of the world's great work for Christ both in and out of the church. They make excuses lightly. They readily give up attendance at church services for some form of pleasure. They seldom prove their loyalty to God by serving in his church. They spend freely for themselves but ungenerously for their church. They are slackers.

What Church Services Do for Us. "Why should I go to church?" a young girl asked her grandfather.

The grandfather was silent a moment, and then he said: "Tell me, child, has the piano-tuner been here yet? You said that the piano needed tuning."

"No, I am still waiting for him, the piano needs tuning sadly. I tried to play last evening, but my playing was a dismal failure."

"Now see, my child, our souls are like a musical instrument," then said the grandfather. "The strings become slack and out of tune very quickly, they must be tuned up from time to time."

"What do you mean, grandfather?"

"All strings—goodness, faith, courage, generosity, reverence, love—all grow less vibrant in us, without our knowing it even. But when we hear the gospel proclaimed at church we see how we have lost tune. We are tuned up once more to what is the true pitch of righteousness. But the tuning does not last. And so one must go regularly to church to have one's soul tuned aright."

The Church Has Claims upon You. You young people are strong; and the church of Christ lays claim to your strength. You came into the church to serve, not to be entertained. When you came before these altars, to profess your allegiance to your Lord, he met you there and asked you to put your strength at his disposal; and, if you do not recognize that claim, you are blind to your duty. If you do not respond to it, you are untrue to the Christ whom you profess to serve. Service is not to be an incident of your Christian life; it is to be its law, as it was the law of Christ's life. The sooner you accept the truth, that as Christians you live for other people, the sooner you will be down upon the firm, hard, base-rock of the gospel theory of life.—Marvin R. Vincent, in God and Bread.

One Thing You Can Do. Have you tried to increase the membership of your class and school? In some of our Eastern States, even where the Church school has its best hold, sixty per cent of the boys and girls of school age are not connected with any Church school. Are there many in the city or village where you live? Is there not work here which you should do?

Sentence Sermons. Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining; they just shine on.—D. L. Moody.

It is no disgrace to the star that it does not shine as a noonday sun.—J. E. McFadyen.

To belong to a church is to make it easier to be good than to be bad.—Dean Hodges.

Whenever you do a kind deed to others for Jesus's sake, you are witnessing for him and thus helping in the work of the church.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Galatians? 2. What does he mean by the words of verse fifteen of our lesson? 3. What did Jesus say in Jn. 15.5, 8 about bearing fruit? 4. Commit to memory the list given as "the fruit of the Spirit."

MAKING THE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them. Ephesians 5.11

LESSON Galatians 5.13-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 6.10-20

GALATIANS 5.13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these:* fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM, verses 13-15. "Brothers," wrote Paul to the Galatians, "you are free from the Law but Christian liberty does not mean that you can do as you please."

"A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to all" (Martin Luther).

Liberty and license are not synonymous. Do not use your freedom as a license for indulging your lower impulses, but live in accordance with the law of love. "Flesh" is used here for "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness and makes for evil. It signifies the entire potency of sin." "Through loving service for others," continued Paul, "you fulfil the whole divine law, which is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Paul here quotes Lev. 19.18.

"The freedom of the gospel consists in slavery to the law of love. The emergence from bondage through Christ is the passing into a sphere of life in which all the power should act under the dominion of the true motive—love" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Then, remembering that the Galatians were prone to quarrel, Paul adds, "But if ye bite and devour one another—act toward one another like dogs or wild beasts—beware lest you destroy one another." "Mutual backbiting and hatred can only end in the destruction of one another's spiritual life."

Where two people quarrel, both are at fault. "How do you keep yourself from being involved in the quarrels?" a member of a contentious church was asked. "By letting the angry person have all the quarrel to himself," was the reply.

II. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, verses 16-18. Walk by the Spirit, submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all your acts, and then you will not fulfil the desire of your evil nature. For the evil nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit are antagonistic. "Throughout this passage the 'Spirit' is evidently the Divine Spirit, for the human spirit in itself and unaided does not stand in direct antagonism to the flesh" (Lightfoot). "When Paul speaks of 'the Spirit,' does he mean spirit in man, or does he mean the Holy Spirit of God? I am inclined to think that in a great many cases he means both. A little child is sulky and cross, and the mother takes the child up in her lap, and talks with it, and reasons with it. By and by, the pouting lips begin to be drawn into a pleasanter expression, and the child brushes the tears from its eyes, and the frown is smoothed from the brow, and the little

child jumps down and runs away, playing. Whose spirit is in the child's—mother's or child's? Both. The mother's spirit is in the child's" (Lyman Abbott).

"The Spirit strives to hinder you from obeying your evil nature, and your evil nature strives to hinder you from obeying the Spirit, for they are at warfare one with the other, and prevent your doing what you would." "Paul's theory seems to be as follows: Man's glory lies in his will. In him, however, are two hostile forces. The flesh seeks ascendency, urging him to choose the things he likes. The Spirit urges him to unite himself with God and things divine, to use his will to govern his life according to spiritual motives."

"Are we conscious of this dualism? Do we know anything in ourselves corresponding to Stevenson's story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Is it a hardship, a disadvantage, to have this conflict for the possession of our wills? Paul says, No. It is by struggle that we have to form and to cherish our ideals. We always have the choice of motives, the choice of roads, open to us. A life that is disciplined blossoms to loveliness and becomes fruitful" (John Gardner).

"If you are led by the Spirit," Paul continues, "you are not under the law, for you will not disobey it." "Law exists for the purpose of restraint, but in the works of the Spirit there is nothing to restrain" (Lightfoot).

"Standing on the sands o' Dee, I saw a huge wall of masonry between me and the railing. Innocent waves lapped peacefully upon the sands a mile or more from the wall. One might say, 'How silly to build such a wall!' The wall was not built for those waves but for the wild, unruly waves that rush and tear when the tide is in and the storm is on. So the law is not made for one for whom it is not needed. For the Christian his loyalty and love are enough" (Johnston).

"Law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly, and sinners" (Paul).

III. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH, verses 19-21. The works of the flesh are manifest—plainly seen—Paul declares, and then he gives a repelling list of some fifteen vices which were common among the Galatians. "It may be pointed to as a proof of depravity that vocabularies have more words descriptive of forms of sin than words descriptive of forms of holiness. Under the fruit of the Spirit Paul gives a list of nine, but under the works of the flesh his list extends to fifteen, properly sixteen, and the word translated 'which' implies that he did not profess to give an exhaustive list—he could easily have added other instances" (R. Finlayson).

"The horrid enumeration follows a natural order. The list begins with sins against self; then come what were more directly sins against God; finally, there are the sins against society" (A. W. Robinson). "The words fall into four groups. The first group includes three sins in which sensuality in the narrower sense is prominent; the second includes two that are associated with heathen religions; the third group contains eight in which the conflict with others is present; the fourth consists of drunkenness and its natural accompaniments."

"I forewarn you, tell you plainly, even as I did on my visits to you (Gal. 1.9; 4.13)," Paul adds, "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

"These are the sins I fain would have thee take away,—
Malice and cold disdain;
Hot anger, sullen hate;
Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great;
And discontent that casts a shadow gray
On all the brightness of a common day" (Van Dyke).

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, verses 22-24. He who is governed by the inner Spirit is not content merely to refrain from breaking the law; he exercises positive virtues such as Paul now enumerates: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

"The list, like the former, is threefold, corresponding to the same three great aspects of life, but with a significant change of order. Love, joy, peace, have reference to the life of a Christian in his intercourse with God; long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, describe the qualities which should characterize him in his bearing toward his fellow-men; then finally we have the description of the life

in respect of self. The really free life of the Spirit will culminate in meekness, by which is meant a due estimation of the place which self ought to hold; and temperance (in its widest meaning of self-control), which is the vigorous determination to see to it that self is kept in its place" (A. W. Robinson).

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Paul).

Note that "self-control" takes the place in our Revised Version of "temperance" in the Authorized Version. This is because we have limited the word "temperance" to abstinence from strong drink, whereas it concerns the avoidance of many evils and has been well defined as "a practised mastery of self," self-control. "Followers of Christ," Paul tells the Galatians, "crucify the flesh, put to a violent death their evil tendencies."

Observe that he does not say fruits, but fruit. "That means that we are not to be content with one or two, but all nine are to be in every individual life. It is not for one man to show love, and another joy, and another peace; but it is for one man to show the whole nine elements. It is like a cluster of grapes. You need every one of the grapes to make up this cluster."

"Against such there is no law." "Paul is content to remark—not without a touch of irony in his tone—that these things do not seem to call for the interference of legislation!" (A. W. Robinson).

V. THE FINAL COUNSEL, verse 25. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." Walking by the Spirit is the effect of living by the Spirit. If the Divine Spirit has control of our spirit, then we are living loftily, doing daily what we believe Christ would have us do.

"Walk is greater than talk, and it is much more easy to talk about our walk than walk our talk" (Dan Crawford).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, verse 20. All these were evils especially prevalent in the cities of Asia Minor. So great was the rivalry and wrangling among the cities that the Emperor was called upon to settle rival claims for the honor of first place in a province.

Drunkenness, revelings, and such like, verse 21. The remains of the later Greek comedy, and the paintings on Greek vases, show how characteristic and universal such revels were in the Greek cities. *Komos*, revel, was made a god, and his rites were carried on quite systematically, and yet with all the ingenuity and inventiveness of the Greek mind, which lent perpetual novelty and variety to the revelings.—Wm. M. Ramsey.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In our text about the standard of Christian living, whom did Jesus bid us love? What other virtues did he commend? In what lesson was our Golden Text about love?

The Epistle to the Galatians. The people to whom Paul wrote his letter lived in Galatia, the Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor. In Southern Galatia were the cities where Paul founded churches on his second missionary journey—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. He visited Galatia again on his third missionary journey. Then two or three years later he wrote this letter.

The letter falls naturally into three parts of two chapters each. In the first part, Paul indicates his commission and authority. In the second, he deals with his argument of justification by faith. In the third part, he exhorts the Galatian converts to avoid the dangers to which they were exposed and to fulfil their duties as Christians.

It looked to the Galatians as though Paul's teaching, that followers of Christ were not under the law, would lead to lawlessness. In the beginning of the fifth chapter

Paul tells them that Christ sets them free from the bondage of the old law, and urges them to hold fast their freedom. Then in our lesson text he tells them not to err in thinking that freedom from the requirements of the law means disobedience to its spirit, which is that of love to others. "To men who have been accustomed to think of law as the only obstacle to free self-indulgence, or to those who have not been accustomed to high ethical standards, freedom from the law was easily taken to mean that for the Christian there is nothing to stand in the way of the unrestrained indulgence of his own impulses. Of this danger Paul is well aware (Rom. 6.1; Phil. 3.17; Col. 3.1), and beginning with this verse he addresses himself vigorously to meeting and arresting it."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Ephesians 5.1-21.

The students of the University of Texas were asked what they thought were the worst sins of college life today. They gave the following sixteen, in this order of demerit: sexual sins, stealing, cheating, lying, drinking, gambling, vulgar talk, Sabbath-breaking, swearing, gossip, selfishness, idleness, snobbishness, extravagance, smoking and dancing. It might be profitable to secure your pupils' ideas on this subject, and lead them to place selfishness higher up in the scale of evils, at the root, in fact, of all evils.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WORKS OF DARKNESS AND WORKS OF LIGHT

Beginning the Lesson. "'As long as your conscience needs a slave driver you are really a slave,' said a wise old teacher. The wonderful thing about the Christian religion is just that it makes moral responsibility a joy instead of a task. Paul is very eager that the converts who have not thought much about these things shall see clearly that the freedom of the Christian is emancipation from evil desire, and not emancipation from the inhibitions of goodness. There is a type of man who thinks that he must do something which is bad in its nature in order to prove that he is free. Paul knew that the license of the wrongdoer is only a rearrangement of his chains. 'Freedom is only a make-believe unless it has a heart of love.' No man can have too much freedom if noble, unselfish love enters in his heart. Any freedom is too much if it is the slave of a hard and calculating selfishness. In words which fairly ring with happy understanding, Paul declares that it is love which makes freedom a safe possession" (Lynn Harold Hough). What are Paul's words?

The Flesh against the Spirit. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has left on record an interesting account of a visit he made to the Library at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he saw a fine statue of Lord Byron. All the world knows something of the tragically sad career into which Byron was hurled by sinful indulgence. He has well described his own condition in these words, written on his thirty-sixth birthday:

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!"

Mr. Spurgeon says the librarian instructed him to stand in a certain position and look upon the statue of Byron. He looked and said: "What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" The librarian then led Spurgeon to a position on the other side and told him to look again. Then there seemed to be in the face of Byron such a scowl and dreadful leer as Milton would have painted into the face of Satan when he said, "Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." "Do you think the artist designed this?" Spurgeon asked. The librarian answered, "Yes, he wished to picture two characters—the great, the almost superhuman genius, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul."—Joseph Nelson Greene, in The Portrait of the Prodigal.

Drinking in the Colleges. Let me describe to you a type of fraternity house dance which takes place in some of the smaller colleges. This would not be true of the large formal balls, but the boy who is willing to tell the truth will verify it as a picture of some of the more frequent and intimate fraternity "house dances."

The party usually starts about nine in the evening and carries on until 2 A. M.,

3 A. M., 4 A. M. and sometimes much later. Automobiles are parked in the lanes around the house. Liquor is brought by nearly every man. Some is carried on the hip, and the rest is left in the car. Between the dances much promiscuous drinking is done. Many boys get drunk, sick, and what not. Hardly without exception some girl or girls (usually the very popular ones) will get intoxicated, and then there is a scene which would shock even the high-steppers of a decade ago.

Many of the girls both drink and smoke. Together with the boys, before the evening is out they have reached the "I don't care" stage. "Dirty" stories are reveled in by both sexes, and the whole show can only be described by the word "rotten."

You can imagine that frequent retreats to the limousines by couples in this condition are not conducive to right behavior. Not all the girls, by any means, drink to a point where they lose control of themselves—but there are usually some who do, and the breakdown of the moral laws gets much of its impetus here.

Things go on at college dances which never would have been tolerated by any fraternity ten years ago. If you happen in at one of these rowdy "house dances" and wander upstairs after the evening is well begun, you'll find boys and girls in the rooms together—lounging, petting, drinking. You won't see much, because the lights are down and the smoke is too thick, but you'll go out thinking to yourself, "What have things come to?"

In some of the colleges these parties have been carried to such extreme limits that a ban has been put on all house parties. In other colleges the more sensible students and the near-by alumni have called a halt on the rowdiness which was growing beyond all bounds even for those who considered themselves "broad-minded."

That the youth of our colleges will, after a time, get over the present feeling of smartness at breaking the Prohibition Law and turn their attention to something else is quite possible. At least let us hope so.—Ernest W. Mandeville, in The Outlook, 1925.

How President Hopkins Made a College Temperate. Mark Hopkins was one of the most eminent and thoroughly successful teachers that this country has ever produced—so much so that President Garfield could suggest, as his idea of a college, Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other end.

Every student who entered Williams College during my college life, whether for an advanced course or from another college, was obliged to subscribe to two pledges. The first, at the beginning of the second week after entrance, was as follows:

"I, A. B.—, promise on my faith and honor that, during the term time, and while residing at college, I will neither drink any intoxicating drink, nor have any agency in introducing it into college."

"If any student violates this pledge he will be dismissed from the college."

The second pledge, called "The Matriculation," was subscribed to before the close of the first term, and not until then did the student become enrolled as a full member of the college. It read as follows:

"I, A. B—, on condition of being admitted a member of Williams College, promise on my faith and honor to observe all the laws and regulations of this college, particularly that I will faithfully avoid the use of profane language, gaming, and all disorderly behavior."

Were these pledges kept? I never knew of one instance, during my four years, of any student's breaking either the pledge concerning drink or gaming; I only once heard the use of profane language, and in one single instance, where a student was found guilty of impure life, he was dismissed from college at the end of his first term.—William D. Porter.

Another Work of Darkness. The "dope" drama is being played out in all continents and among every race in the world. The morphia addict is a doomed man. At a very early stage all sense of right and wrong disappears. There is not on earth any more pitiable or dreadful sight than the helpless victim whose very will is a chained prisoner at the chariot wheel of the drug, as he reels down the slopes of sloth into hallucination, tortured nerve, moral corruption, to paralysis and lunacy—culminating in sheer putrescence of body, mind and soul, to which the only end is a death robbed even of death's natural decency and dignity.

Let us look a little closer at a characteristic individual story. A brilliant young Chinese official shows reforming zeal and a power of leading his people in fighting against evil and bringing order out of her chaos. The enemies of reform resolve that his career must be stopped.

Do they kill him right off? No; the oriental mind can work along subtler and less perilous paths. His wife is "got at." Will she not try an injection of morphine —just to feel what it is like, that is all? Then another injection and another, till the new vice has gripped her. Then she introduces it to her young husband. Gradually, insensibly, the fire of enthusiasm dies from his eyes; the energy for reform flags from his drugged brain; the young knight withdraws from the fighting lists to lie on the couch of an opiate sot. At last he dies an emaciated lunatic, and the whole world is the poorer by the loss of one more of its too few strong moral leaders.

That story, which is a true one, could be multiplied in China, in Japan, in India, in New York and Vancouver and London.

The greater part of the world's supply of manufactured opium comes from the British Isles, and by far the greatest opium-fields in the world are in India. British planters do not send the raw opium to China, nor do the British manufacturers consign the morphine to China. The morphine is sent for the most part *via* the United States to Japan. The profit to Japan on opium smuggled into China last year was almost certainly nearer $40,000,000 than $30,000,000. Although the greater part of the morphine comes indirectly from Britain, Japan has made the principal profit, and has also erected recently factories in Formosa, in Korea, in Manchuria and South Siberia; while Portugal has her busy factories in Macao.

The whole picture is worthy of a Holbein's brush, or the acid pen of a Heine or a Swift—the "civilized" peoples of the world, Britain, America, Japan and Portugal, sitting around the most multitudinous people of the world, the Chinese, and seeking to enrich themselves by her moral and physical destruction.

There is only one solution—a genuine, united determination by Britain, Japan and China, as a part of the League of Nations (with pressure on Turkey, Arabia, and Persia), to reduce the opium-poppy fields to the dimensions asked for by the medical profession for the purposes of healing.—Condensed from an article by Basil Mathews.

"Slums of the Mind." A writer in an English Magazine calls attention to the dangerous prevalence in England of what is aptly called "slums of the mind." His warning is perhaps even more needed in America. Referring to the moral degradation into which much contemporary imaginative "literature" has fallen, he writes:

"Never before have the printing presses so flooded the market with reading matter; and it is probably safe to say, also, that at no other time in recorded history—neither in the decadent days of the Roman Empire, nor in the most degenerate period of medieval Italy—has so much moral filth bespattered the world. Harshly as we may condemn the delinquent authors, publishers and producers, responsibility does not rest with them alone. A vast proportion of the world's populace is morally sick: pernicious books and plays are but a symptom of the disease. Burn the books, shut up the theaters: excellent palliatives, both—but the sickness will remain. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole cure. If we so preach the gospel to all men, that they "turn from their wickedness and live," the evil outpourings of unregenerate minds will fail utterly and cease—as having no place wherein they can flourish to the profit of their producers."

The Duty of the Church. There is doubt whether the moral effects of the prohibition law have been as good as the economic effects. If they have not been, it is because individuals in great numbers, among that part of the population which we should expect to be law-abiding, have chosen to evade or defy the law because it interferes with their own convenience or limits what they term their personal liberty. To meet this unexpected situation the report of the Federal Council makes a recommendation that seems to us highly constructive. It advises the churches to begin a real campaign for abstinence. A century ago, in the face of far worse social conditions, the great temperance movement took its rise with the earnest support of the churches. It made its way slowly at first, then more and more rapidly. Drinking, which had been, if not universal, at least general, became looked down upon. Drunkenness, once a jest, became a scandal. The country grew every year more temperate. State after State outlawed the liquor traffic; at last public sentiment was strong enough to outlaw it throughout the country. The good people who had won this victory, after a century of fighting, were inclined to lay down their arms. The law was on the statute books; the State would enforce it.

But drinking is a moral problem, and law does not, by itself, deal very successfully with moral problems. The churches, the temperance societies, still have their work to do. That is to change the hearts of these people who are openly flouting the law; to convince them of the wrong they do themselves, their families and society; to

put a greater degree of moral fervor behind the law. The religious forces of the community are always stronger when they do their work without depending on the civil government to sustain them. We believe that nothing could so quickly make prohibition a triumphant success instead of a hopeful experiment as a vigorous, consecrated, tireless campaign for personal abstinence, carried on by the church people and the temperance societies throughout the country.—The Youth's Companion.

A Woman's Influence. It is a great thing to be a woman, and especially a beautiful woman. Women, and especially charming women, do pretty much as they like with us. It was so ordained. When God makes a woman attractive, he means her to attract. But woe be to that woman who charms us away from goodness! Woe be to that woman who allures us from the love of God!

It is a great day in a young girl's life when she discovers that she is courted, sought after, worshiped; and that men find a pleasure in sacrificing themselves to gratify her whims and fancies. In the cool of the evening of that never-to-be-forgotten day, let that young girl, her fair face flushed and her lovely eyes sparkling with the wonder of the discovery that she has that day made, draw aside from the world and read, all by herself, three tremendous stories. Let her read the story of Jezebel from the Old Testament; let her read the letter to the minister at Thyatira from the New Testament; and then let her read the story of Guinevere.

When Arthur proudly introduced his lovely Queen to the brave knights of his Round Table, she was so radiantly fair, so exquisitely beautiful, that every heart stood still at sight of her bewitching comeliness. She appeared in Arthur's court like a white rose on a knight's breast. And she meant to make herself the very heart and center of all the chivalries and courtesies of Arthur's reign. No man could look into the face of Guinevere without feeling that her presence made it easier to be good. Poor Guinevere! Who would have dreamed that day that the ruin of Arthur's court and the shipwreck of Arthur's hopes would have been compassed by such fair hands as hers? Guinevere's exceeding great and bitter cry has touched us all to tears. Arthur has gone; the knights have been disbanded; chivalry is in ruins. The pale queen rises in her anguish and remorse.

> "Then she stretched out her arms and cried aloud,
> 'Oh, Arthur!' there her voice brake suddenly,
> Then—as a stream that, spouting from a cliff
> Fails in mid-air, but gathering at the base
> Remakes itself, and flashes down the vale—
> Went on in passionate utterance:
> 'The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
> The months will add themselves and make the years,
> The years will roll into the centuries,
> And mine will ever be a name of scorn.'"

Poor Jezebel! Poor minister's wife at Thyatira! Poor Guinevere!

Let, I say, every young girl to whom has come the consciousness of her own captivating charms read these stories, and then let her kneel and pray that there may never come to her such a day as came to these.—F. W. Boreham, in The Silver Shadow.

For Discussion. 1. Do you agree with George Bernard Shaw that your whole life belongs to the community, and as long as you live it is your privilege to do for it whatsoever you can?

2. What one person can do for the temperance cause. See They knew Me! in The Christian Century for June 11, 1925.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the argument in 2 Cor. 5.14? 2. What does it mean to know a man "after the flesh"? 3. What does it mean to be "in Christ"? 4. What does Paul say about the vicarious sacrifice of Christ? 5. What about the influence of that sacrifice upon men? 6. Have we a responsibility in the evangelization of others? 7. What is the best method of evangelism?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

SELF-CONTROL FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. In the castle of the old Danish stronghold of Kronborg four striking pictures hang, which once seen never can be forgotten.

In the first picture you see a boat starting out to sea. In the middle of the boat a charming blond-haired boy sits looking with childish eagerness at the waves. By his side an angel stands guard. At the end of the boat there are two small figures, one bright and joyous, who has hold of the rudder; the other dark and gloomy, who is asleep. The one is the good spirit of the boy; the other the evil spirit.

In the second picture the boy has become a young man, eagerly looking ahead at some goal. The good spirit still directs the rudder and controls the sails, but the evil spirit has awakened and is secretly trying to wrest the rudder from the good spirit. Will he succeed?

The third picture gives the answer. The young man has become a middle-aged man. With all his strength he is trying to meet the terrible storm that has arisen. The sky is lowering. The good spirit sits weeping, while the evil spirit holds the rudder and guides the boat into the storm.

In the last picture sits a weary, silver-haired old man. The storm has spent its force, the evening sun is shining through the clouds and lighting up the near-by haven. But the mast of the boat is broken, and only with great difficulty is the good spirit guiding it thither, for the evil spirit has been vanquished.

These four pictures portray the conflict that Paul in our lesson today says each one must wage. There are two great antagonists in each Christian: the lower, evil inclinations that, left to themselves, will drag him down, and the higher, good inclinations, the fruit of the divine Spirit operating on the human spirit, that are leading him upward. Which will win?

Uncleanness. About thirty years ago there stood on the most splendid avenue of Newport, a palace built by one of the richest men of New York. It was said to be a copy of the Palazzo Doria in Venice. There was a Moorish room, a Chinese room, a gallery of pictures of the most famous of modern masters. It was a luxurious, beautiful home.

The owner took possession of it in May, and in July his only son died of a low, lingering fever. During the seven succeeding years the house was occupied by different tenants, but ill health or death visited each. It was found at last, after repeated, fruitless examinations, that an old drain existed under the foundations of the house, and that, unseen it had been pouring death into the beautiful dwelling all these years. The walls were so impregnated with poison that the house, after remaining without a tenant for some time, was razed to the ground.

The lives of some men are like this dwelling. They have every fortunate circumstance which good birth, influence, wealth, or education can give to make them strong, and noble, and helpful to other men; yet some foul trait, inherited or acquired, breathes poison and death through the whole life.

There is a marble bust of the boy Nero in the gallery of the Uffizi Palace, which shows him to have been "that noble child" of whom history tells us, affectionate, gay and kind; but the sensual lip hints of deadly poison already at work within, and it foretold the monster of history.

Physicians sometimes examine the blood of their patients and detect disease by the revelations of the microscope. Every one who is beginning his work in the world should search his heart, if, perchance, there may be in it a poisoned drop which may corrupt and ruin his life.—The Youth's Companion.

Self-love versus Love for One's Neighbor. Those who break the prohibition law are actuated by self-love. Their selfishness leads them to choose the gratification of their own appetite rather than the common good.

At a great gathering in Newcastle Cathedral, Lord Astor dealt with the drink problem in England. He contended that drinking led to sin, and that the drink traffic had become a social menace.

"Subtle fallacies lure us at every turn," he said. "Take that selfish cry of personal liberty. Is it Christian to say: 'I can drink in moderation; I like the glow caused by drink; why should I give up this because Smith inherited a weak head, is drinking himself into the grave, and causing his children to live in a hell, not a home?'

"Which is more precious, your and my rights to drink, or the social and moral rights of Smith's wife and children?"

Self-Control for the Sake of Others. Some of you sometimes wonder why ministers hate liquor so. I will tell you. Because out of every group of young men who start drinking there are always one or two whose nerves are tuned to alcohol,

who are foredoomed as soon as they begin. How can a man take on himself the responsibility of giving liquor to a youth? How do you know but what he is the boy between whose nerves and alcohol like electric sparks the affinities will fly and he be doomed the day he starts?—Harry Emerson Fosdick, in a Sermon.

The Need of Young Workers. The W. C. T. U., to which belongs the greatest credit for the fighting and the victories of the past, must recruit itself in such a way and by such methods that thousands of young women, now indifferent, will enlist. With all respect to the sincerity, devotion and efficiency of the women leaders of this great pioneer organization in the fight for prohibition, their following needs new and young blood. For one thing, they should send their recruiting officers into the women's colleges to arouse enthusiasm by the same progressive methods by which young women throughout the country were inspired to work for suffrage. The young women of this generation did not fight in the same way for prohibition, and they certainly are not fighting for enforcement as they did for suffrage.—Charles A. Selden.

Works of Light Contrasted with Works of Darkness. The contrast between the works of the fleshly—i.e., the selfish life—and the fruit of the Spirit, which is the natural product of his influence, is very marked. In "works" there is effort, the clatter of machinery, the deafening noise of the factory. But when seeking "fruit," one goes naturally to the calm, still, regular process of Nature, which, in ten thousand gardens, fields, orchards, and hedgerows is ever producing, in her secret laboratory, the kindly fruits of the earth. How quiet it all is! It is almost impossible to realize what is being effected by a long summer day of sunshine. The growing glory of the autumn arrives with noiseless footsteps. Lo, suddenly the boughs bend under their burden, the fields are covered with gold. So with the soul that daily walks in the Spirit; there are probably no startling experiences, no marked transitions, nothing to record in the diary, but every year those who live in close proximity see a ripening wealth of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc.—F. B. Meyer.

How Can I Yield the Fruit of the Spirit? How can I make myself lovable, peaceful, joyous? You cannot make yourself lovable, peaceful, joyous. Love, joy, peace, are not made; they grow. Love must be within a man before the work of love can show itself outside the man. Peace must be in his soul before it can speak from his lips as a benediction. In other words, we must be peace-ful—that is, full of peace; joy-ful, that is, full of joy. We cannot make ourselves peaceful or joyful or lovable. These are the fruits of the Spirit.

Growth requires cultivation. Where there is growth there has been a seed or a cutting. But there has been more than that. There have been weeds eradicated; there have been insects coming up to devour, and they have been driven away or killed; there has been a soil loosened around the roots; there have been roots fed, there has been something done to make this fruit worth having. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." We do not expect to grow in knowledge without cultivation. What have you done to cultivate love? Do you expect that it will grow of itself? Whatever will hinder this fruit culture must be avoided; whatever will help it must be accepted, taken, utilized.—Lyman Abbott, in The Outlook.

Sentence Sermons. Of all combats, the sorest is to conquer ourselves.—Thomas à Kempis.

> Cherish your body, for God made it great;
> It has a guest of might and high estate;
> Keep the shrine noble, handsome, high and whole,
> For in it lives God's work, a kingly soul.—James Bartlett Wiggin.

The boy who cannot kill off a bad habit must live with it till it kills him.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To what does the first verse of our lesson refer? 2. Who was Philip? (Acts 6.1-6.) 3. Who wrote Second Corinthians? 4. What does *constraineth* mean? 5. What verse in our lesson warns against selfishness? 6. What does the word *ambassador* mean? 7. How may we be ambassadors on behalf of Christ? 8. How can you tell the good news about Jesus Christ?

LESSON X—MARCH 6

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye shall be my witnesses. Acts 1.8

LESSON Acts 8.4-8; 2 Corinthians 5.14-20

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-7

ACTS 8.4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. 5 And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. 6 And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. 7 For *from* many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was much joy in that city.

2 CORINTHIANS 5.14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. 16 Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know *him so* no more. 17 Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. 18 But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IN SAMARIA, Acts 8.4-8. Persecution followed the martyrdom of Stephen, and the disciples were forced to flee from Jerusalem —they were scattered abroad. They did not think that the responsibility of witnessing for Christ rested upon the leaders alone, and the entire rank and file went about preaching the word.

Philip, one of "The Seven," who became known as Philip the Evangelist because of the success of his ministry (Acts 21.1-8), went down to the city of Samaria. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, but their Lord's last command (Acts 1.8) bade them witness for him in Samaria. To overcome their prejudice against the Samaritans, the followers of Jesus needed only to go to Samaria and preach to them.

If you are prejudiced against any one, do him a good deed.

The Samaritans, like the Jews, were looking for the Christ; Philip made known to them the fact that he had already come. Philip probably little realized the greatness of the movement he was inaugurating when he went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ. He found the fields white unto harvest; the people accepted his good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and were baptized. There was great joy among them when many with unclean spirits, the palsied and the lame, were healed.

"It follows as the night the day that a church with a real personal contact with God cannot keep still about it."

II. THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE OF CHRIST AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON MEN, 2 Corinthians 5.14-17. The realization of Christ's love for him, Paul declares, constrains him, lays a strong hand upon him, directs all his acts.

"Every one before performing an act has the purpose formed in his heart. When the great freshet in the Min River brought down large quantities of timber, many persons incurred danger and some even sacrificed their lives at the bridges trying to get possession of it. First the desire is conceived in the heart, then the effort is put forth to realize it. Paul did not work for riches, honor, or a great name. No such motive moved him in his toils, privations and persecutions. He had a higher and a nobler end in view—the salvation of souls. Our position today is just like his. We have the same great and glorious work before us, and Christ's love should animate every action of our lives" (Hu Yong-Mi).

Christ's love for him constrained Paul because he believed that when Christ gave the greatest possible proof of his love by dying for all, all received power to die, as he died, to sin. "The argument runs thus, that if one acts as the representative of all, then his act is the act of all. If the ambassador of a nation makes reparation in a nation's name, or does homage for a nation, that reparation or that homage is the nation's act—if *one* did *for* all, then *all* did it. Because Christ died for all, therefore all are now dead to sin" (Robertson). He died for all that all should live, as he lived, not for themselves, but for him who for them died and rose again. Christianity is a life to be lived, and the motive power of that life is the Spirit of Christ.

"If he died for us, can we, without shame, frustrate the purpose of his death by not living to him?"

"The logical dependence of verse sixteen on the foregoing lies in the suppressed premise, that in living not to ourselves, but to Christ, we gain new standards of judgment, new ways of looking at things. 'Wherefore we know no man after the flesh.' To know a man after the flesh is to know him by the outward accidents and circumstances of his life; his wealth, rank, culture, knowledge. Paul had ceased to judge of men by those standards. With him the one question was whether the man was, by his own act and choice, claiming the place which the death of Christ had secured for him, and living in him as a new creature. That is the point of view from which he now 'knows,' or looks on, every man" (Ellicott).

"Narrowness and prejudice are the bane of common life. If a man has a distinguished pedigree, if he is renowned, if he is wealthy, if he is learned or eloquent, we seek to know him. If he is obscure, we ignore, even if we do not despise him. The Jews were looking for a Messianic prince and could not endure him who came in peasant's garb. Christianity is the foe of race and class distinctions. It judges man by the image of Christ that is reflected from them, and not by their learning or their wealth" (John Gardner).

"Even though we have known Christ after the flesh," Paul goes on to say, "yet now we know him so no more." Before his conversion Paul had "known," thought of, Christ as a man from Nazareth, of no education, wealth, or position—Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? he was ready to exclaim with Nathanael—but now he thought of him not as the Son of man but as the Son of God; he knew him and the power of his resurrection, and thought of him only as his Savior and Lord. "Paul once looked for a Messiah as a Jewish conqueror, and in the light of this expectation regarded Jesus as, at best, a prophet who had made claims which he was unable to substantiate, and whose career had terminated, perhaps deservedly, at Calvary; but now he looks on Jesus in the light of his atoning death and glorious resurrection, and sees in him the Christ of God" (Dummelow).

Any one who is thus "in Christ," who is united with him by faith, is a new creature, born anew (John 3.3); his old ideals and standards have gone, being replaced by new and true ones. "The expression 'a new creature' was a common rabbinical description of a converted proselyte; but its meaning was enriched in the religion of the incarnation, Jn. 3.3" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

"These words show how completely Paul regarded the day of Christ as a new epoch in the history of the human race. Had he foreseen distinctly that a new era would be dated from that time; that a new society, philosophy, literature, moral code, would grow up from it over continents of which he knew not the existence; he could not more strongly have expressed his sense of the greatness of the event than in what he here said" (Stanley).

III. THE GOOD NEWS, THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, 2 Cor. 5.18-20. "All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ. "The verb translated 'reconciled' signifies to exchange and to reconcile, that is, to re-establish friendly relations between two estranged parties, no matter on which side the antagonism exists. It is God himself who is the ultimate Author of this reconciliation. That the reconciliation is through Christ is the heart of the Gospel of the Atonement" (Expositor's Greek Testament). "We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation," Paul writes in Rom. 5.11.

"Let us take care never to suppose that the blood of the cross was needed

to make God love us, to appease his vengeance, or to wring from his unwilling hand an edict of redemption. The love of God lay behind the cross. Jesus was God—God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The Father does not love us because Jesus died, but Jesus died because the Father loves us" (F. B. Meyer).

"And gave unto us (Paul) the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world (the human race) unto himself, not reckoning—(imputing, A. V.)—unto them their trespasses. Because to us has been committed the ministry of reconciliation, we are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ; as his representatives we entreat you to be reconciled to God." An ambassador must always be on his guard; his public words and acts must accord with the policy and purpose of his government, and his private life must in no wise discredit his country. So a servant of Christ must ever be worthy of his great Master, as with all the dignity and authority of an ambassador, he stands in the stead of Christ and presents Christ's claims to men's hearts.

"When we see our Lord through love-eyes, and then our brother, we must yearn to serve our brother in Christ. We shall intensely long to tell the love-story of the Lord our Savior. What we have seen, with confidence we tell" (J. H. Jowett).

The One Volume Commentary gives this paraphrase of verses 18-20:—"And this change is due to God, who removed the barrier sin had made between himself and us, and gave to us, his apostles, the message of his saving grace. And that message is this, that in Christ's life and work we see God casting down the barrier that divided us from him, and proclaiming forgiveness and love to all mankind: and this is the message of reconciliation which is committed to us. We, then, are ambassadors in Christ's place, conveying to you God's message and desire; we ask you, speaking in Christ's name, to accept this great salvation."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In what lesson was our text from First Corinthians? Who wrote the letter? To whom? Where is Corinth?

The Background of Acts 8.4-8. Two weeks ago our text was from the second chapter of The Acts. It told us about life in the brotherhood of believers after Pentecost. Their numbers have grown so rapidly that The Seven were chosen to help in the administration. One of them was Stephen, who by his teaching so aroused the wrath of Jews from Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, that they set up false witnesses against him and stoned him. Persecution of all believers followed, and they were scattered abroad and bore their witness to Jesus the Christ throughout Judæa and Samaria.

The Background of 2 Corinthians 5.14-20. In a reference to his "beloved brother Paul," Peter warns the readers of Paul's letters that there are things in them hard to be understood. Of all Paul's letters the New Century Bible finds Second Corinthians the most obscure, "a veritable cloudland," and quotes the remark of Schmiede that in passing from the region of the First Epistle into that of the Second, we feel as if we had left a park threaded by footpaths, winding in and out, but all the while tolerably perspicuous, and had entered upon a trackless forest. The Epistle is the most personal of Paul's longer letters and abounds in allusions which we cannot wholly understand.

These thoughts seem to have filled Paul's mind as he wrote this second letter to the church at Corinth: gratitude for the good reception of his first letter, indignation at the insinuations of his opponents who were seeking to undermine his work, and desire of hastening the collection of money which he was making for the relief of the poor in Judæa.

In the earlier part of our fifteenth chapter Paul has written that "we make it our aim, to be well-pleasing unto him (the Lord)" and added that "We are not again commending ourselves unto you (in refutation of his enemies' attacks), but speak as giving you occasion of glorying in our behalf, that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance, and not in heart." And now he declares that it is Christ's love for him which is back of all he does.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Acts 1.6-11; 16.13-15; 2 Corinthians 5.20 to 6.10.

With Paul every Church school teacher can say, "We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us," and he should also be saying to his pupils, "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."

Long ago Bishop McDowell wrote in regard to the Church school as an evangelistic opportunity that it was not such an opportunity just because it was big and had many unconverted people in it, but because of the Book it studies, the spirit that pervades it, the people who direct it and the people who compose it, the purpose that governs it, the conditions surrounding it, and the tremendously personal relations which exist in it.

"There came to be a Bible because there was a divine movement for man's redemption and the salvation and guidance of his life, and this is the record of it. Right Bible study, in the Sunday-school or out of it, should lead straight to the Savior and his salvation. The wonder is that the evangelistic effort is so small and the evangelistic result so meager."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM: DUTY, METHODS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

Constrained by Love to Witness for Christ. Love is the only possible explanation of such a life as that which Paul himself lived, and unto which we are urged by all the constraint of the gospel. The object of Christ's death, which is the supreme expression of the divine love, is indeed just this; and those who realize this no longer are able to live "unto themselves," but are constrained to live "unto him." His love gives the deathblow to all human selfishness. Personal experience of his redeeming grace shifts the curtain of life from self to Christ, and living "unto him" means nothing less than living for the fulfilment of his purpose toward all those for whom he died. That man alone has apprehended the significance of his own redemption who endeavors to spend and be spent in order that other lives may be brought under the power of Christ's salvation.

How high and holy is this calling to live and speak on behalf of Christ himself! If we always realized it, with what scrupulous care would we not order our lives in every detail lest in any way we involve him in misrepresentation! How frequently should we remind ourselves that we are our message; and that not what we say but what we are is our real witness! And how prayerfully should we seek to realize the sufficiency of our Lord's grace to make us true and worthy of his confidence!—J. Stuart Holden.

The True Motive for Engaging in the Service of Christ. I am sick and tired of hearing the word *duty, duty*. You hear so many talk about it being their duty to do this and do that. My experience is that such Christians have very little success. Is there not a much higher platform than that of mere duty? Can we not engage in the service of Christ because we love him? When that is the constraining power it is so easy to work. You never hear Paul talking about what a hard time he had in his Master's service. He was constrained by love to Christ, and by the love of Christ to him. He counted it a joy to labor, and even to suffer, for his blessed Master.—D. L. Moody.

"There Is Another Man." Tennyson had a Calvinist aunt who would weep for hours because God was so good to her. "Has he not condemned to perdition most of my friends?" she said. "But me he has picked out for eternal salvation; me, who am no better than my neighbors." We are none of us Calvinists now, but even now many of us think of religion as beginning and ending with self. Paul says that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. We are saved to serve.

The lookout on a ship descried another ship with sails gone and masts broken. He could see no signs of life upon it. A boat was lowered and sailors were sent to make an investigation. On the deck of the disabled ship they found one man with sunken cheeks, glassy eyes, and bony hands—a mere bundle of bones, yet alive. They took the starved man back with them, and when they had restored him to consciousness his lips began to move and he whispered faintly, "There is another man—there is another man."

The first thought of the saved man was of the other who needed saving, "That is how it ought to be with us and the great salvation of the gospel," comments the Rev. J. D. Jones in referring to this incident. "Saved ourselves, we ought to remember, 'there is another man,' and seek to save him. That 'other man' is in the same street with ourselves, next door to ourselves, in the same house with ourselves, and we have not troubled ourselves about him. Friends, let us remember 'there is another man.' Having found the Christ ourselves, let us tell others about him."

What Every Church Needs. That little company of men and women, who in that first strenuous century carried the banner of the Cross into every strategic center of the then known world, were, as Bruce has called them, "crude Christians." Obscure men and women, for the most part, with little of learning or wealth to give them leverage. Only one, Paul the Tarsan, had the best training of his times. But all of them were devoted, fearless, indefatigable witnesses!

What the church needs today is witnesses, a group of people "whose hearts God has touched," willing to try and determined to learn how to tell others something of the Great Story. They are not needed to address large audiences, but to speak to just one individual, here and there, directly and kindly.

What personal service, then, will you give this year to enlist men in the way and work of Jesus Christ? It's your job, Christian layman. Christ Jesus said so. "Ye shall be my witnesses." Begin like Andrew and find your Peter, like Nathanael and find your Philip. The early church added daily to its membership such as were being saved because its members were witnessing for Christ, by personal character and by positive invitation. Your church will make some impact on the unevangelized in your community when you begin the same definite, continuous, personal witnessing for Christ!

Will you start now to get a group in your church to join definitely in this heartening, productive, victorious, worth-while task?—Ernest Bourner Allen.

The Effective Method of Evangelism. It is the way of the first disciples. You speak of the doctor's cures, of the healing powers of the seaside place, of the charm of a song, of the beauty of a poem, of the powers of a book or speaker, and others believe your words and act upon them. "Do you love Jesus, father?" a child once said. "Why do you ask?" "I never hear you speak of him," was the artless reply. Does not that explain much? Silence is no argument for anything. The things and persons we believe in we talk about. Would not churches grow faster in numbers and influence if the members imitated Andrew and Philip, and spoke of the power and sweetness of the gospel, and brought others to the Lord in whom they trust?

It has been said that John Inglesant reached its audience through a widely circulated photograph of Mr. Gladstone holding a copy of the book in his hand. Men are greatly influenced by the testimony of those they respect and honor. They reason: "If he sees all this in Christ, then there must be something I have missed, some great good which I ought to possess." So our witness becomes the avenue by which Christ enters the souls of others. In this work he depends on us.

"If you are light," says Dr. Maclaren, "shine." The lighthouse keeper takes no pains that the ship tossing far away at sea may behold the beam that shines from his lamp; all that he does is to tend it and feed it. That is all you and I have to do—tend the light, and not like cowards, cover it up. Modestly, but yet bravely, carry out your Christianity and men will see it. Do not be as a dark lantern, burning with the slides down, illuminating nothing and nobody. Live your Christianity, and people will see Christ in it and be drawn to him.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus said, "Come unto me." At the close he said to his followers, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Come! Go! There is the double action that makes a healthy, growing church. First we are to come to Christ, the Center and Head. Then we are to go and scatter the truth we have found. We come for light, and go to shine. We come for vision, and go to testify. We come for healing, and go to tell others of the Healer. Here is the double beat of the Christian heart that keeps the life-blood in circulation.

Is not the real cause of the decay of the church to be found in the lack of this

personal testimony? Browning, in Ferishtah's Fancies, tells how Dervish Ferishtah went into the woods, and saw an eagle swoop down to its nest and put food in the eaglet's beak. Ferishtah said, "That is what God is doing for me! I must open my mouth wide and he will fill it." So he went into the desert and waited for God to feed him. But he nearly died of hunger. Then when his strength was lowest an angel appeared to him and said, "You have misconceived the incident which you saw. You are not the eaglet but the eagle. You are not to be fed, but to feed others."

It is profoundly true. Life becomes burdensome and declines unless spent in constant outgo. The deepest joy of life is only found when we use it up in unselfish service. We grow in grace, and power and knowledge, not merely by what we hear, but by the translation of the hearing into witnessing. Go and tell others that Jesus is precious and you widen his Kingdom and your own soul at the same time.—Editorial in Sunday School Chronicle.

The Ideal Evangelism. The minister must kindle the flame, but the fire must spread through all the congregation. Indeed, the real evangelism must be done, not by the minister, but by the people. The New Testament never contemplated the conquest of the world by public oratory. To the primitive church such a thing was out of the question. Services such as those that we are able to hold on Sunday evenings were never dreamed of. The early church was hunted and harassed by cruel persecution. Her services were held in secret. Her sanctuaries were places of peril. The only persons present, therefore, were devout believers. The only objects sought were worship and fellowship. An evangelistic address would have been strangely out of place. Yet, despite the select character of its assemblies, that early church was nevertheless a passionately evangelistic church. Its members rejoiced, and its persecutors complained that its teachings spread like wildfire. "We are but of yesterday," wrote Tertullian, "yet we have filled your cities, islands, towns and boroughs; we are in the camp, the Senate, and the Forum. Our foes lament that every sex, age and condition, and persons of every rank are converts to the name of Christ." And in three centuries the Roman Empire itself capitulated unconditionally to the triumphant church! The church had conquered the world, not through the attendance of the world at her services, not even by her public witness outside of her church walls, but by the private influence of her members over those with whom, during the week, they came in contact. She brought the nations to her feet, not by public evangelism, but by an exquisitely beautiful representation, in private conduct, commerce, and conversation, of the merciful and majestic teachings of her Divine Lord. The individual captured the individual.

That is the ideal evangelism. If, as Sir John Seeley points out in Ecce Homo, if we could recapture that atmosphere, it would give a businesslike tone to all our Sunday gatherings. People would come together "with a clear perception of the purpose of their meeting. They would not desire that the sermon should be—what in the nature of things it seldom can be—eloquent. It might cease then to be either a despairing and over-wrought appeal to feelings which grow more callous the oftener they are excited to no definite purpose, or a childish discussion of some deep point better left to philosophers. It might then become weighty business and be as impressive as an officer's address to his troops before battle." When that day comes the ideal evangelism will have become the actual evangelism.—F. W. Boreham, in The Methodist Times.

For Discussion. If your religion is occupied exclusively with your personal salvation, your spiritual perfection, your fate after death, the reward that shall crown your piety and your works, and if your neighbor has little place in it, then, though you be true and faithful, irreproachable in doctrine and even in life, your religion is not the right one; for it is lacking in the very essence of true religion—the gift of self.—Charles Wagner.

Evangelism and the materialistic spirit of the age. See The Christian Advocate for January 1, 1925.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we call the "marching orders" of the church? 2. What was the beginning of foreign missions? 3. What does the pronoun "we" in Acts 16.10 indicate? 4. How was Paul hindered in his plans? 5. Why was it more important that he should go to Europe than to Bithynia? 6. How was Judson hindered as a missionary, and what

better field did he find? 7. How was Livingstone hindered and led in his travels? 8. What is the need of foreign missions today? 9. What can our class do for missions?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TELLING OUR COMPANIONS ABOUT JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus had offered himself on the cross as the Savior of men. In the early days following his death and resurrection all his followers became messengers bearing the good news to all they met. In the twentieth verse of our selection from Second Corinthians, what does Paul call such messengers? Why is the word *ambassadors* a most fitting one here? In the first part of our lesson text we read about an ambassador in Samaria who shared his knowledge of Christ with multitudes. Who was he? Why was he in Samaria?

A New Creature in Christ Jesus. A girl in Hong-Kong was a student in a school attended by girls from wealthy, influential families. Oh, how extremely difficult it was for those girls to become Christians because of the opposition of parents and because of the awful conditions in their homes! Twelve girls accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior in a meeting held in that school one Sunday morning; this girl was one of them. She wrote immediately to her father telling him she was a Christian. He was so angry that he would not write to her for several weeks. Then he determined to take her out of school, and sent her older brother to Hong-Kong for this purpose. The brother arrived at the school and asked for his sister. As she came into the room, he started in surprise and said:

"What has happened to you? I never saw you look this way before."

In her face he had seen such joy and peace and light that he knew something had happened. My friends, the truth is that something very real had happened: that girls had become a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things had passed away, all things were become new, so new that the brother saw and marveled and inquired. She told him the simple story of how Jesus Christ had come into her heart, and was dwelling there, and had made all things different in her life. And the brother hungered. Instead of taking his sister home with him he went to town to buy a Bible that he might learn of the Christ who had given his sister a new face and a new heart.

In the old life we thought so much of ourselves that we had little thought or time or strength to give to others. But when once the Lord Jesus really becomes our life, then "the love of Christ constraineth us," and fills us with a new purpose and a new passion to tell the good news of him to those who know and love him not.—Ruth Paxson, in The Record of Christian Work.

Dumb Children. It is a terrible thing to be dumb. It is perhaps just as grievous to have a dumb child. A young mother in California began to be worried when, at sixteen months, her little son had not even said "mama." When he was two years old, her anxiety had reached such a pitch that she asked the doctor to examine him. The boy came when he was called, and by many tests it was proved that there was no deficiency in the sense of hearing. It was also demonstrated that his understanding was excellent, since he obeyed to the letter certain commandments. But still he remained silent. His organs of speech were in perfect condition, but they remained unused. His anguish-stricken mother consulted specialist after specialist but without any effective result. One day when the little lad was more than three and a half years old, he came in from his play, and, to the astonishment and delight of his mother, talked quite fluently. Within a few weeks his mother's friends noticed that she seemed to grow younger every day.

Many Christians are like that little boy. They hear, they come and go, they show many signs of understanding, but they remain dumb. In spite of the clear-cut commands to witness, no word of testimony ever falls from their lips. Have we not the right to wonder how the Father must be saddened because of his dumb children?—Donald Grey Barnhouse.

How a Son Told His Mother about Jesus. Most young people think that they are not mature enough to have religious responsibilities or to exercise a religious influence over those older than themselves. In that they are quite mistaken; no one who is old enough to make up his mind that he wants to lead a Christian life is too young to live it as an example to those about him, whoever they may be.

Among the interesting reminiscences of Dr. William E. Hatcher, printed in The Examiner, is the story of the little tow-headed printer's boy in a newspaper office who joined Doctor Hatcher's church in Petersburg, Virginia, although neither his mother nor any of his older brothers and sisters were in the least religious.

One day the boy's mother came to see the minister, and Doctor Hatcher received her with misgiving. He feared that she was going to oppose actively her son's association with the church.

But he need not have feared. The woman's eyes were full of tears as she spoke of Hugh. "There never was such a boy," she said. "I wish you could see him as we see him at home. Since he became a Christian he is different, and in spite of us all, he has made everything about our home life different.

"He is a revelation to me; he is so peaceful, so obliging, and so helpful. His room is next to mine, and I noticed that he moved round a long time before he went to bed. I wondered why he stayed up so long, and so one night I looked through the keyhole to see what the little fellow was doing.

"He was reading the Bible. After a time he stopped reading and knelt down beside the bed. Somehow I knew that he was praying for me, and God was hearing him. It touched and softened my heart. I sprang to my feet, stumbled into my room, fell down by my bedside and gave my life to God for my boy's sake. I had to tell Hugh at once. I went in, sat down at the foot of the bed in the dark, and told him that I had accepted the Savior, and that it was the way he had been living that had moved me to do so."—The Youth's Companion.

The Gospel According to You. We have in the Bible what we call the four Gospels, the Gospel according to four different men. It is of course the same Gospel as four different men apprehended and recorded it. And, believe me, there is to be a Gospel according to you. You are to go out from here to live a Gospel. You are to go home, and let others who perhaps never read the written Book read your life. And Jesus shall not be hidden. This is the greatest of all the service to which he calls and inspires us, that we have each to give a new interpretation of him to the world. That is what I mean when I say there is to be current in your circle of life a Gospel according to you. And it shall be the very power of God unto the salvation of those who shall thus see Jesus Christ made visible in you.

There is, as you know, a satellite of Neptune called Uranus. Uranus was always quite easily visible to astronomers, but they did not see the hidden planet Neptune, which is millions of miles away from the earth. Mr. Adams, however, noticed that the orbit of Uranus was regularly deflected from the normal course; from which he inferred the attraction of some greater hidden body. With the true instinct of the scientist he set himself to find out what this hidden body was which deflected Uranus in this way; and away in the unfathomable blue he discovered the great constellation which was subsequently called Neptune. And, mark you, he found it because of the attractive influence which that greater body exercised upon the smaller.

Which thing is a simple picture of an even greater fact. There yonder at home is a father, a brother, a sister who does not know and love the Savior. There at school are girls who cannot see him, or have not as yet seen him. Somehow their eyes are blinded just as yours once were. But when they see your life deflected out of the ordinary course, then they will ask: "What is the attraction which has transfigured this girl's ideals and transformed her character? What is it that has made her strong and sweet and courageous? What has set her at this service to which she is giving herself?" And then they will discover—Jesus! And that will be the Gospel according to you.—J Stuart Holden, in The Life of Fuller Purpose.

Sentence Sermons. Every lover of music knows Mendelssohn's Songs without Words; my life as a Christian is to be a Sermon without Words.—G. H. Knight.

You are responsible for representing Jesus Christ today.—Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of "assayed," Acts 16.7? 2. Locate on the map all the places named in the lesson text. 3. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 4. Why support foreign missions when there is so much need of home missions? 5. What is our church doing to make Christ known to all nations? 6. What can our class do to help in the work?

MAKING THE WORLD CHRISTIAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Matthew 28.19

LESSON MATTHEW 28.16-20; Acts 16.6-15

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 60.1-5

MATTHEW 28.16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped *him;* but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

ACTS 16.6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there.* And she constrained us.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE COMMISSION TO MAKE THE WORLD CHRISTIAN, Matthew 28.16-20. This interview of the disciples with their Risen Lord took place in Galilee, upon the mount where Jesus had appointed. When they saw him, they worshiped him, though some doubted. We cannot think that the disciples who had difficulty in accepting the stupendous fact of the resurrection of Christ were the eleven, for their doubts had been dispelled in Jerusalem. Jesus told them of his universal dominion—"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth"—and then gave them his commission to make his world-wide power a reality: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations." They were given a seemingly impossible task, but The Acts tells us that they carried it out. There we have the record of ever-enlarging circles of evangelization, first in Jerusalem, next to a wider circle in Judæa, then to a still wider circle in Samaria, and at last to a circle that embraced the known world from the Imperial city of Rome. "Love never contracts its circles; they widen by as fixed and sure a law as those around a pebble cast into still water" (James Russell Lowell).

"Remember, fellow Christians, how wide was the horizon of Jesus. Our horizon widens from cradle to home, school, city, country, and with some, perhaps, to the last man. But to Jesus the outside rim of the earth was the first horizon that he saw, and the last. When he was born, good tidings came unto whom—the Jews? 'Unto all people'; 'among all nations'; 'throughout the whole world'; 'to every creature'; 'to the uttermost part of the earth,' are Christ's words. 'Go ye unto all the world' is his limitless command, his boundless expectation" (M. D. Babcock).

"If the world is to be evangelized in this or any other generation, it will be because a sufficient number of individual Christians recognize and assume their personal obligations to the undertaking" (John R. Mott).

"Baptising them into (confessing) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

"Go forth in the great endeavor to make the mind of the world a Christian mind, the heart of the world a Christian heart, the creative will of the world

a Christian will; and behold, from your mighty associated labors, coming forth like a sunrise after a night of horror, a Christian civilization. Be thou in mind, in heart, in will, in experience, in gifts, thyself a foreign missionary, and an endless and ample supporter of the religion that claims all men for God as his children in the dear, happy, helpful life of love" (George A. Gordon).

And then Jesus uttered his wonderful words of comfort and encouragement and cheer—"Lo, I am with you always (not *will* be, but *am*) even unto the end of the world."

"If the Church has often faltered in her world-wide task, it is not her Master's fault. He gave the universal vision, the inalienable endowment. He pledged himself to the world-wide and age-long task" (R. C. Gillie).

II. THE HAND OF GOD IN MISSIONS, Acts 16.6-15. Paul and Silas and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia in Asia Minor, carrying out their purpose of visiting the churches which had been founded on Paul's previous missionary journey. They planned to go into the province of Asia on the Ægean Sea, but this plan was frustrated, they were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

"What to others are disappointments, are to believers intimations of the way and will of God" (John Newton).

When they reached the borders of the province of Mysia they tried to turn northward into the province of Bithynia on the Black Sea, but there were insurmountable obstacles in the way, "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not."

"You may have the door shut in your face with a slam. And it may be done to turn your mind away from petty, meager success into something that has dimensions and content. You can afford to let Bithynia go if God is granting you instead a great section of Europe."

Still headed westward, without stopping to preach in Mysia, they traversed this province till they came to Troas on the Sea. Troas was the gateway to Europe, and as Paul walked its streets he must have seen more than one man from Macedonia who seemed to him the incarnation of the needs of that district, nay, rather, of the whole of Europe. He must have stood in the harbor peering out to the distant islands that fringe the coast of Macedonia, and longed to conquer the world for Christ. And that night the vision came: he saw a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him to "Come over into Macedonia and help us." "There was that mighty power which has been called 'the urge of God' acting upon a soul ready to obey the divine behest to the uttermost."

"As far as we know there was not one man in Macedonia who wanted Paul. What then means this man from Macedonia? Who is he? Who sent him? Ah! there is just the key to it. God sent him. Not the Macedonians themselves. They did not want the gospel. God sent him because he saw they needed the gospel. The mysterious man was an utterance not of the conscious want but of the unconscious need of these poor people" (Phillips Brooks).

Paul believed that God had called him to preach in Macedonia, and decided to cross at once to Europe. Here in the tenth verse we have the first use in the missionary journeys of Paul of the personal pronoun *we,* showing that Luke, the writer of The Acts, was one of the company and is writing as an eyewitness of events.

"In all high venture there is a glorious blindness—blindness to everything except the beckoning hand" (S. H. Morrison).

They sailed from Troas to the island of Samothrace and then on to Neapolis, the port of Philippi in Macedonia. To Philippi they went at once. There was no synagogue in the city, or Paul and his companions would have gone there on their first Sabbath. They went to the riverside, hoping to find a group of Jews gathered for prayer, for it was customary for Jews to meet by a river when they lacked a synagogue. They found several women, among them Lydia, a seller of purple-dyed garments from the city of Thyatira. To these women Paul preached the word. Lydia believed, and she and all her household were baptized. Then she besought the missionaries to make her house their headquarters, and her entreaty prevailed, it became the first church in Europe.

"We are told sometimes that the church today is full of women, that there are no men going to church. I contradict the statement whenever I hear it made. But the measure in which it is true is the condemnation of men; and let the men who are becoming Christless and churchless lament if the hour ever should come when the women cease to worship" (G. Campbell Morgan).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A seller of purple, Acts 16.14. Thyatira, like Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. Lydia sold the purple-dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi; and she had, no doubt, a regular connection with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was. In ancient times, many kinds of garments were woven in their perfect shape; and there was much less cutting and sewing of cloth than at the present day. Lydia, of course, sold also the less expensive kinds of garments; but she takes her trade-name from the finest class of her wares, indicating that she was a first-class dealer. She must have possessed a considerable amount of capital to trade in such articles. As her husband is not mentioned, and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and in Macedonia.—W. M. Ramsay, in St. Paul the Traveler.

The purple dye was obtained from a secretion of two mollusca, the purpura and the murex. The ancients had, of course, no mineral dyes, and this therefore was the only really firm dye which they possessed, and it is often contrasted, in the poets and elsewhere, with the treacherous dyes obtained from the herbs. However, the word *purple* was loosely applied to all the colors which the creatures produced, from deep red to violet, and was regarded throughout antiquity as a great luxury and mark of distinction. The dye was first discovered by the Phœnicians, whose god Merkart (so the story went), noticed one day that his dog had got his nose red by poking about among the shells. The Greeks learned about the dye from the Phœnicians, but the knowledge was totally lost during the Dark Ages. It was rediscovered in 1859 by a French investigator, who traced some violet stains on Minorca fishermen's clothes.—A. E. Zimmerman, in The Greek Commonwealth.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In an earlier lesson what did Jesus call his disciples? For what purpose did he say they were to shine before men? How did the early Christians make known the good news of Christ the Savior?

The Background of Matthew 28.16-20. The forty days after the resurrection were almost over when Jesus met and talked with the disciples in Galilee. His final appearance and ascension were from the Mount of Olives.

The Background of Acts 16.6-15. Paul was on his second missionary journey. From Antioch in Syria he crossed into Asia Minor, going up through the pass called the Cilician Gates into the central tableland, where he revisited the churches he had founded in the province of Galatia and district of Phrygia. Bithynia, which he was prevented from entering, was the province along the Black Sea. Mysia, Asia and Caria were three provinces from north to south along the Ægean Sea. Troas was a prosperous city on the coast of Mysia. Macedonia was on the mainland of Europe north of Greece.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: 2 Corinthians 11.23-29.

Missionary collections and missionary spirit are not synonymous. To imbue your class with the missionary spirit, lead your scholars to realize the need for missions and engage them in definite missionary activities. Intermediate and Senior classes will become interested in sending gifts to missionaries through the Surplus Department of the World's Sunday School Association. (Address Dr. Samuel D. Price, 216 Metropolitan Tower, N. Y.) They will become interested in various ways of earning money with which to educate a boy or girl in the foreign mission field of your denomination. Senior and adult classes can be aroused to their opportunity

of having a missionary substitute, of supporting some one in the mission field. A prominent business man has placed a missionary on the pay-roll in his office, to whom a check for salary is sent regularly every month. And there is "home mission work" to be done in every community among those who attend no church school, work which should engage the thought and effort of every member. Is your class doing its part toward diminishing the number of children and youth in the United States of school age—some twenty millions of them—who do not belong to any church school, whether Protestant, Catholic or Jewish?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Beginning the Lesson. What are "the marching orders" of the church? Dr. R. F. Horton rightly finds it amazing that a commandment like this should lie almost unnoticed for centuries, should be so ignored and forgotten that a generation in which Carey arose regarded it as an interference with the ways of Providence, and then should leap into light and power and present itself as the marching orders of the church issuing fresh from the Captain's mouth. But that is the extraordinary property of the words of Jesus, he explains; they cannot die.

The Great Commission: Does It Merit the Name? All three Synoptists agree that our Lord's instructions to his disciples called for the world's evangelization. Neither master, disciple, nor evangelist, however, is responsible for the title by which that final charge has commonly been known. The title is the spontaneous characterization of later ages. How far is it deserved?

Great in position. This last command has the advantage of a most emphatic position. It is no less than the last word of Christ to his friends.

But this is not only Christ's final word, it is Christ's final deed. The commission is the necessary logical outcome and application of all that has gone before since Christ first called the twelve to follow him. It contains the practical meaning of all the preaching and instruction, and not of that alone: of all the planning and praying also, of all the faithfulness and fearlessness and sorrow and sacrifice. Whatever Christ has said or done or suffered from the beginning, if it had any outlet into the future at all, must find that outlet through this charge which sends the disciples out fitted to be channels of living water to the world.

Yet this is not all. To grasp the position of this final command of Jesus we must obviously go back to Jesus, and include in our view the entire revelation of God up to his day. What is Jesus with reference to the revelations preceding him? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews answers: "God, who at sundry times and diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Jesus, then, is the climax of all past revelation from the beginning, and here in the commission is the climax of the revelation of Jesus.

Great in conception. Consider the vastness of the idea. It is vast as the world, as history, as all human life. "Go ye into all the world:" there go the space limits. "Make disciples of all nations:" there go the race limits. "Preach the gospel to the whole creation," that is, to every man, woman and child who shall be created: there go the time limits. Surely a charge before which all human boundaries thus fall flat is great in outline and idea.

Great in promise. The promise, "I am with you" is obviously not to be dissociated from the command to which it is attached, "Go, and I will be with you." "If you go, I will be with you," it might have been written. Christ has thus attached to the missionary enterprise the altogether most remarkable promise of his personal presence.

The promise is the power of the fulfilment. I see those men of old, scattered by persecution from Jerusalem, through Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth, preaching the word. "Alas," they say, "for our weakness." The answer comes: "I am with you." "Ah Lord, but the nations are many and the world is wide, and the resistance of men to thy rule is very bitter and very strong."—"I am with you!"

Great in authority. "Go!" This word consists of only two letters, but it contains the power of two worlds. We may not say, perhaps, that there is more of heaven's authority behind this command than behind any other: yet this command makes prominent the fact of authority as does no other. From this command the

disciples could not but draw the inference that Jesus believed in his own right to command anything.

And is not this the meaning of the prefatory words: "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth." "All power," the Authorized Version puts it: "All authority," the Revised Version more truly says; the "power" is not absent, but it lurks in the background, while the "right" is brought forward and emphasized. "I have the right of God to command: go, therefore!"—Condensed from an article in the Biblical World by John H. Strong.

The Trouble with Mrs. Jellyby. "Never have a mission, my dear child," said Mr. Jellyby.

We all know why he said it, and we sympathize. The cluttered-up hallway, the tattered and soiled children always tumbling down or otherwise injuring themselves, the careless, impudent servants with their incompetence and their pilfering, the drawing-room curtains pinned back with a fork, never leave our mind. We recall the mistress of all this confusion serenely dictating letters, opening mail, presiding over committees, untidy, ill-kempt, and gently contemptuous of those who could be so limited in their vision as to let the task lying immediately to hand come before Borrioboola Gha. Mrs. Jellyby will stand forever as the type of all those who overlook their plain duty to seek for more grandiose, more spectacular, or more interesting occupations, in "the larger service."

Now Andrew Lang, in his preface to the Gadshill Edition of Bleak House, points out that Mrs. Jellyby, whether as a symbol of contemporary England or as an individual, might enter several pleas in justification. If her schemes had succeeded they would, in the long run, have given new opportunities to many who had made a failure of life in England. History has justified her to the extent of proving that South Africa was worth grabbing. No great advance can be made by humanity unless some one is willing to sacrifice the present in order to fix his eyes on the far off and the future.

Still, in such case, the first sacrifice Mrs. Jellyby should have made was the refusal to become Mrs. Jellyby. No one has the right to shirk definite present duties for more or less problematical future visions. The horrible confusion, the dirt and neglect that marked her house and children, the financial ruin she brought upon her husband, the almost murder of the spiritual life of her eldest daughter, take Mrs. Jellyby out of the class of comic caricatures into the bitter tragedy of inefficiency and sin.—Marshall M. Day, in American Church Monthly.

The Master's Command. On a pinnacle in South America, at the very summit of a lofty range of mountains, an immense statue of Jesus has been placed. There is a deeper significance in the incident than the sculptors themselves saw. For Christ is always on the hilltops pointing his church to the immensities beyond. The church has always inclined toward parochialism; she has contented herself with those few miles that lie between herself and the distant foothills. But the Master has stood ever on the sunlit summit pointing to the infinities beyond.

"Go," said the Master. "Go ye into all the world." In that tremendous "Go," the Church has caught the glimpse of the other side of the hill and has been saved from narrowness by the discovery.—Frank W. Boreham.

The Master's Promise. And lo, I am with you always: this is the promise which Livingstone in his memorable phrase called "the word of a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honor." Christ sent his missionaries out, but he did not send them alone. He went with them. Note that the promise follows the command, and that it is those who obey him who realize his living presence with them. "He is not 'with' any who remain shut up in themselves," Dr. James Moffatt comments. "The sense of his real presence will die away from any church or individual indifferent to his command to 'go to all the world,' to our own world, in the first place, and then beyond our inner circle. May we never forget this, that he promises to be with those alone who do not confine themselves to private ecstasies or to the safeguarding of their religious feelings, but who live and move to impart their faith."

An illustration of this thought comes from a Canadian paper. Years ago, the article says, a great church in the United States split on the question of foreign missions. The larger group said, "We have no call to do missionary work abroad, while there is so much need at home." The smaller group recognized its missionary obligation in response to the great Master's summons, "Go ye." Though the first group was the larger and in spite of the fact it spent all it could to propagate itself

at home, it has gone out of existence. The second group has grown to be one of the largest of the denominations of that country and has successful missions on every continent of the globe.

Comparative Numerical Strength of the Religions of the World. The small single figure here represents Christianity, 565,000,000. The large figure represents all other religions, 1,082,829,000, made up of Confucianism and Taoism, 300,830,000; Mohammedanism, 221,825,000; Hinduism, 210,540,000; Animism, 158,270,000; Buddhism, 138,031,000; Shintoism, 25,000,000; Judaism, 13,053,000; unclassified, 15,280,000.—The Christian Herald.

The Work of the World's Sunday School Association. The aims of this Association are: "To promote the missionary idea in Sunday-school work, and to promote the Sunday-school idea in missionary work." It maintains secretaries in every important field, is training native leaders, and furnishing Sunday-school literature in many languages. It is doing a great work, but is equipped to accomplish far more if supplied with greater funds. Is your school actively identified as a partner in this world enterprise? If not, write for information to the General Secretary, Dr. W. G. Landes, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City.

Relative Numerical Strength of Christianity and Other Religions

Why Foreign Mission Work Is Increasingly Difficult. As the Orient increases its contacts with and knowledge of the Occident, it becomes harder to convince the Orient that the Christian has a gospel which is a power to salvation. The most discouraging mission fields thus become those port cities in which contact between East and West is most unremitting. When the first Protestant missionaries reached their fields they stood almost alone. It was as though, in some great darkened theater, a clear white back-drop had been let down, a spotlight focused upon it, and, into the center of that circle of light, there had stepped the figure of a single man. There was nothing behind him, nothing beside him, by which to scale him up or down. He stood alone, and inevitably, in the eyes of his audience—the people to whom he had gone—he came to represent not only himself, but all the people of his own kind and the life of which he was assumed to be a typical product. Gradually, through the years, the scene behind the missionary has changed. The movie is only a recent factor in the shiftings that have been taking place. Today the missionary stands, not starkly alone, but almost lost against a vast and variegated background, which threatens to loose him in its complexity. He struggles to release himself from this background, to assure his audience that his message has nothing essentially to do with the background. But, to twist the old saying of Emerson's a bit, the audience, having had its eyes turned to gunboats and concession hunters and exponents of racial superiority and the like is likely to answer, "What your background is speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you say." It is this effort to work despite the handicaps imposed by our western non-Christian civilization that makes the missionary task one of increasing difficulty.—The Christian Century.

The Spirit of Brotherhood. The early Christians fairly burned with missionary zeal. Our missionary efforts will be the more effective just in proportion as we shall render them in the same spirit of brotherhood and charity which marked the earliest Christian missions.

Such a service as you aspire to do for mankind can be rendered only under the inspiration of a broad and genuine liberalism. It must rest on toleration. It must realize the spirit of brotherhood. And the foundation of all missionary effort abroad

must be toleration and brotherhood at home.—President Coolidge at the Missionary Conference in Washington, 1925.

Missions the Hope of the World. Not kings nor presidents, not diplomacy nor craft of state, not Washington Conferences nor agitations for a warless world, not Leagues of Nations nor World Courts, will ever solve the problems of the great Pacific basin and bind this human world together in one great family of the children of God, where love shall be the law, and "righteousness and peace shall kiss each other." Nay, none of these, but just the simple power of the story they told and the life they lived, to whom he said, on Olivet, "Go ye into all the world"—that story told and lived patiently today and tomorrow into the hearts of thousands whose names no earthly history will record,—that is the fundamental dynamic that will sweep out of the East and out of the West superstition, ignorance, sin and selfishness; will like a mighty magnet gather all truth of all religions, and all the good of all peoples and build it into the bulwarks of a new and redeemed humanity; that alone will dissolve racial prejudices and national hatreds, and one day furl the battle flags forever, and seal the brotherhood of man.—L. J. Birney.

For Discussion. 1. The changed attitude of missionaries toward the so-called heathen religions. See the Christ of the Indian road, by E. Stanley Jones.

2. The range of modern missionary activity.

3. How our Christianity at home looks to the residents of the Far East.

4. The motive and end of Christian missions. See Chapter II of the Christ of the Indian Road, by E. Stanley Jones.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Under what conditions did Jesus utter the words of our text from John 14? 2. Why did he not describe Heaven to his disciples? 3. What is the argument of Paul in our text from Second Corinthians? 4. What is the good of thinking about the future life? 5. What are the reasons for the Christian belief in immortality? 6. What did Paul say about those who have hope in Christ in this life only? (1 Cor. 15.19.)

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW WE CAN SPREAD THE GOSPEL

Beginning the Lesson. The story of how the gospel first came to Europe is one of the most familiar of all the adventures in the life of Paul, the greatest of missionaries. Paul, you remember, was a wonderful compound of energy, enthusiasm, and devotion. He had but one purpose in life: he traveled and preached and taught in order to bring the knowledge of Jesus the Christ to every one who heard his voice. What region shall I conquer next for Christ? was his thought as at Troas he threw himself down to rest for the night. How was his question answered? The vision was to him an indication of God's purpose to use him in a new field of labor, and accordingly he was a passenger on the next vessel that weighed anchor from Troas bound for Europe.

What is the command of Christ which Paul was obeying?

The Responsibility of the Church for Foreign Missions Enterprise. When William Carey went forward on his great mission he said, "There is a gold mine in India. I will go down, but you must hold the ropes." William Carey and his little band of loyal supporters were comrades in a common crusade. He was the adventurer; they were the admiring administrators. He was the hero; they were the heralds in the home land of the new missionary program. He was the pathfinger; they were the pioneers of progress. He was the miner; they were his ministers, ministering to him in his necessity. The Christian Church has only one task, one program, one gospel, one great commission, and as David Livingstone said long ago, "Christianity requires perpetual propagation to attest its genuineness."

The missionary motive through the years has had a changing emphasis. Once it was pity for the great multitude that plunged hourly over the dark precipice into eternity. Today it is fear, and it presses upon us from all sides, racial fear, fear of the possible rising tide of color, economical and industrial fear, fear lest the great surplus of raw material in Asia and Africa and the unlimited supply of cheap labor may in time slow down the wheels of our own industrial life, political and military fear, fear of the arming millions of the East who can count hundreds to our units.

How terribly and tragically inadequate are all such motives! A time limit might be set to every one of them. One does not need to know intimately non-Christian lands to be fired with missionary zeal. One needs to know Christ and to hold the deathless conviction that he is able to save unto the uttermost. It was this motive that was sufficient for the great path-leaders of our challenging enterprise.

I begin to visualize a world-encircling chain of graves; the graves of the heroes who loved Christ and gave themselves for him. We think of the graves of John Eliot and David Brainerd and the nameless Jesuit missionaries of the great interior. You can tell of Neesima with his wooden cross in Japan, and Morrison in China and Chalmers in New Guinea, and Carey in India, and Henry Martyn and Ion Keith Falconer in Arabia, and Shedd in Persia, and Hannington in Africa. You can stand in the silence of Westminster and look down where lies the body of the immortal Livingstone, and then pass out into the great deep and think of Judson, buried beneath the waves, and of his lonely wife standing on the shore of Burma saying, "All this I do for my Lord." Concerning them it can be said, "For the love of their Lord they did it." The devotion to Jesus Christ that sends men and women to the ends of the earth and keeps them there is the only adequate motive to inspire the Church to send them and to keep them there.—Condensed from an Address Delivered at the Missionary Convention in Washington, by Hugh T. Kerr.

God's Call to Two Sunday-School Scholars. It was at Sunday school that James S. Dennis first heard God's call to be a missionary. While at home on furlough in 1855, Dr. Henry H. Jessup, of Syria, preached in Dr. Stearns's church in Newark, New Jersey, and made an address in the Sunday school. At the close of his talk to the children, he asked them, if they felt so inclined, to write out the following resolution when they reached home: "Resolved, that if God will give me grace, I will be a missionary."

Little Jimmie Dennis was in the school that day and was deeply impressed. On reaching home he went at once to his room and presently came to his mother with a piece of paper on which he had written: "Resolved, that if the Lord will give me grace, I will be a missionary."

"James," said his mother, when she had read the words, "you are too young to know what you will be."

"Yes," was his answer, "I know. But I did not say, 'I will be,' but, 'if God gives me grace, I will be.'"

The pledge made by the boy was redeemed by the man, and thirteen years later James S. Dennis left America to become a missionary to Syria. Dr. Jessup, who was again at home on furlough, delivered the charge at his ordination and learned for the first time of his boyhood resolution to be a missionary. "Surely the Lord must have inspired me to make that suggestion when I did," says Dr. Jessup, "for Dr. Dennis has done more for foreign missions than almost any other living man."

It was in the Sunday school, too, that James Chalmers, the martyr hero of New Guinea, made the great decision of his life. He was a boy of fifteen at the time, and a member of the United Presbyterian Sunday school at Inveraray, Scotland. Gilbert Meikle, the earliest young pastor of the church, was also superintendent of the Sunday school. Young Chalmers' class met in the vestry, and one Sunday, after the boys had returned to the chapel for the closing exercises, Mr. Meikle took from his pocket a copy of The United Presbyterian Record, and said he was going to read a letter from a missionary in Fiji. It told of cannibalism and the power of the gospel, and at the close, with tears in his eyes, the young pastor said, "I wonder if there is a boy here this afternoon who will become a missionary, and carry the gospel to the cannibals." In his heart, one boy responded, "God helping me, I will."

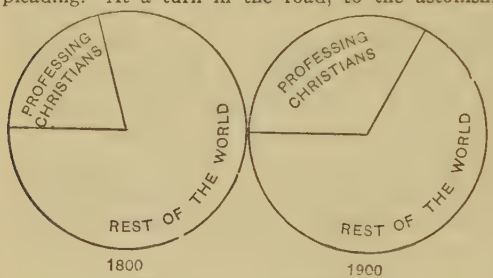
That boy was James Chalmers. At the close of the school he spoke to no one, but started at once toward home. "The impression became greater the farther I went," he says, "until I got to the bridge above the mill. Then I went over the wall attached to the bridge and kneeling down, prayed God to accept me, and make me a missionary to the heathen."

For some time the impression remained in full force, then gradually it faded away. Falling in with some godless companions, he drifted out of the school. But a few years later, during a time of revival in the church, he was powerfully convicted of sin and soundly converted. Shortly after, renewing his boyhood vow, he became, first a city missionary in Glasgow, and later a missionary to the South Sea Islands under the London Missionary Society.—Belle M. Brain.

Helping to Make Disciples of All the Nations. Two missionaries are going on

a long evangelizing tour among widely scattered villages in one of the mission areas in India. There are many villages to be visited, and they will not be able to come again for a year. At one village where they draw up their bullock-wagon under the shade of a big tree, a great crowd of natives gathers together. There is a strange and intense silence as the missionary preaches of the love of God and the forgiveness of sins and the possibility of a new life. The missionaries have never had quite such a reception of their message before. At night the people come to them again to ask questions. Early the next morning they must go on to the next village before the heat of the day. But even before they start, a deputation has come from the village to beg and entreat that a Christian teacher be sent to them. It cuts the missionaries to the heart to see the look of hungry expectation in the eyes of their petitioners, because they know from sad experience that it is destined to be disappointed. A great impression has been created. It needs to be instantly followed up and fostered, otherwise it may fade away. A teacher at this juncture is precisely what they need; just at this crisis he may save years of after-effort. Sorrowfully the missionaries are compelled to reply that it is impossible to grant their request, as the funds of the society will not permit.

The deputation of the villagers follows the bullock-wagon out of the village, still pleading. At a turn in the road, to the astonishment of the missionaries, a native teacher from the central station is seen approaching; greeting him with delight they inquire how it was possible for him to get away. He tells them that a Sunday school in a back street in London has doubled its contribution to missions, and so has enabled an additional worker to take his place. The joy of those villagers as they return breathless with the news is like the joy unspeakable and full of glory of the resurrection morn. It gives an undying impetus to the work of Christ in the village and forwards the coming of the Kingdom there by a whole generation.—Cuthbert M'Evoy.



The Spread of Christianity

Do What You Can. One of the converts whom Mrs. Howard tells about in her book, Pastor Hsi, was an old woman called Mrs. Han. She had lived a consistent Christian life for a year or two, but was strangely unwilling to be baptized and join the mission. At length one of the missionaries found out her reason. "If I only could be a true follower of Jesus and be baptized!" she said wistfully. "But how could I? I could never do the work." "But what work couldn't you do?" inquired the missionary. "Why, the Lord said that his disciples were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. I am not able to do that. I love to tell of him. I have told my son and his wife, and all our neighbors, and in the summer time I can go to several villages near at hand. But I am old and feeble, and I can only walk a little way. You see it is impossible for me to go to foreign countries and preach the gospel. If you had come earlier, when I was young—but now it is too late. I cannot be his disciple." When it was explained that she only needed to do what she could, she was the happiest of women.

Have we learned this lesson? Some one has defined philanthropy as John's opinion of what James should do for William. Is your interpretation of the Great Commission limited to what you think some one else should do for others? Are you less true a follower of the Christ than that heathen convert?

Sentence Sermons. Reaching one person at a time is the best way of reaching all the world in time.—H. Clay Trumbull.

It is something to be a follower, however feeble, in the wake of the Great Teacher and only Model Missionary that has ever appeared among men.—Livingstone.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1 What happens to us when we die? 2. What answer to this question does Jesus give? 3. What answer does John give? 4. What does Paul say in his second letter to the Corinthians will decide our verdict at the judgment? 5. What parable of Jesus is recalled by these words of Paul? 6. What was Paul's aim? 7. What is ours?

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

GOLDEN TEXT: In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. John 14.2

LESSON John 14.1-3; 2 Corinthians 5.1-10; 1 John 3.2, 3 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Revelation 21.1-7

JOHN 14.1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

2. CORINTHIANS 5.1 For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. 2 For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: 3 if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord 7 (for we walk by faith, not by sight); 8 we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. 10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

1 JOHN 3.2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. 3 And every one that hath this hope *set* on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PROMISE OF CHRIST, John 14.1-3. See The Historical Background. "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me."

"'Twas the Master himself who said it
To the sorrowful little band,
Facing an hour of darkness
That they could not understand."

"In my Father's house are many mansions," thus Jesus comforted them. Our word "mansion" meant originally merely a place of shelter, and accordingly the margin of the Revised Version has the word "abiding places."

In speaking of his own death, Jesus said, "I go away," "I go to the Father." So Paul said, "The time of my departure is at hand." They were travelers, setting forth on a journey to a better country. So Christ would have us think, not that we are going to die, but that we are going to set forth on a journey that ends at our Father's house.

"If it were not so, I would have told you." In the minds of all peoples there is a belief in a future life. This belief, Jesus's words tell us, is true, for otherwise he would have disillusioned the minds of his followers.

"I thank thee, O Father, that there is a voice within me which contradicts the silence of death" (George Matheson).

"I go to prepare a place for you." "Jesus prepared a place for us by the way he took to prepare a place. It was a very wonderful way. In a lonely valley in Switzerland a small band of patriots once marched against an invading force of ten times their strength. They found themselves one day at the head of a narrow pass, confronted by a solid wall of spears. They made assault after assault, but that bristling line remained unbroken. Time after time they were driven back decimated with hopeless slaughter. The forlorn hope rallied for the last time. As they charged, their leader suddenly advanced before them with outstretched arms, and every spear for three or four yards of the line was buried in his body. He fell dead. But he prepared a place for his followers. Through the open breach, over his body, they rushed to victory and won the freedom of their country.

"So the Lord Jesus went before his people, the Captain of our salvation, sheathing the weapons of death and judgment in himself and preparing a place for us with his dead body. Well for us is it, not only that he went away, but that he went by way of the Cross" (Henry Drummond).

"I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what God is preparing for him" (Mark Rutherford).

As there is no uncertainty about his going, so there is none about his coming: "I come again, and will receive you unto myself." "The promise is fulfilled in the death of Christ, and it has changed the aspect of death. The personal second coming of Christ is not a frequent theme in the Gospel" (Expositor's Greek Bible). "'I come again, refers not so much to his coming at the end of the world, or in great crises of history, or at the death of believers, as to the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit in his church, preparing the way for the final and completed union of Christ and his people which he predicted in the succeeding part of the verse" (New Century Bible).

"And will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." See Jn. 17.24.

"The man of the world has no hope after death, or rests only in vague notions of the goodness and mercy and leniency of God—if there is a God. Death, if he is conscious of its approach, comes as an appalling disaster, as the spirit prepares to launch out into the darkness of eternity; while in the last hour his confusing notions of a God who will admit any man, just as he is, into heaven, shrivel up as a flimsy pretext and bring no solace to the affrighted spirit. But the faith which rests upon the Word of God does bring solace. I once underwent a serious operation, the outcome of which was uncertain, and I well remember the last words I spoke to my anesthetist: 'Nurse, it is a great thing to know that if those great eternal gates swing open for you to pass through, you have a great Friend on the other side!'" (Howard A. Kelly).

II. PAUL'S EXPECTATION OF A HEAVENLY BODY, 2 Corinthians 5.1-5. "This earthly body of mine," Paul writes, "will undergo dissolution, but I know God will give me at death an eternal heavenly body. The earthly body is but a perishable tabernacle or tent; the heavenly body will be of divine origin and everlasting."

John Quincy Adams met a friend one day who said, "Good morning, and how is John Quincy Adams today?" "Thank you," was the ex-President's reply, who was then eighty years of age, "John Quincy Adams himself is well, quite well, I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundations. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are much shattered and are trembling with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon. But he himself is well, quite well."

"I believe that the body is simply an instrument or tool which the invisible spirit of man employs, and that the decay of the tool no more indicates the decay of the spirit than the destruction of the violin indicates the death of the violinist. By immortality I mean not merely that the influence of man will survive his death, nor merely that the spirit will live after the body decays and mingles with the dust, but that the invisible spirit which dwells in the body is itself not subject to decay. Immortality is not merely a future hope; it is a present possession" (Lyman Abbott).

Paul's earnest desire is to be alive at the coming of Christ (as he believes many of them will be, 1 Cor. 15.50-52; 1 Thess. 4.15) and without passing through the experience of death to be then transformed, having the new and glorious heavenly body superimposed upon the earthly body. "For verily in this present body we groan," are his words, "longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven." In both the preceding verse and this one he speaks of the body under the imagery of a shelter for the personality: in the former as a dwelling, here as a garment. "Being clothed thus, I shall not be left naked, a disembodied spirit." "The shrinking of the ancients, both Jews and Greeks, from the disembodied state as they conceived it, is well known from its expressions in their literature. See, for example, the dreariness of the spirit-world portrayed in the eleventh book of the Odyssey" (Dummelow).

"For we who dwell in this earthly tent are burdened by suspense, for we would not put off our mortal body in death, but would without passing through that experience, have it transformed (swallowed up, absorbed) in the heavenly body." The double metaphor in this verse, that of a house and that of a garment, is quite in Paul's manner, the Expositor's Greek Testament reminds us. Stanley finds the explanation of both in the image which both from his occupation and his birthplace would naturally occur to Paul, the tent of Cilician haircloth, which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habitation and of a vesture.

"The truth is that no single metaphor could possibly convey to the mind a true conception of heaven or of the condition of the blessed. We may speak of the heavenly home as a place, but we have to remind ourselves that it is rather a state here expressed by the image of heavenly vesture."

"It is for this very purpose God has wrought in us who gave us his Spirit as a pledge." The customary interpretation of these words is illustrated by Robertson thus: "As the vital force appears in things so different as leaf, flower and fruit, so the divine life manifests itself first in the spiritual and then in the literal resurrection. And just as when the flower appears, you infer the fruit, excluding the possibility of a blight, so when spiritual goodness appears you infer future glory. This is Christian assurance. Therefore, if God's Spirit be in you, be confident, yet humble." The One Volume Commentary interprets the words from another angle: "Paul here argues for immortality and the resurrection life from the instinctive longings of the human heart. God has planted these longings there; he has confirmed them by the pledge of his Spirit in conscience, aspiration, and all spiritual blessings; and he will not in the end disappoint us; compare 'Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,' Ps. 16.10."

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why:
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: Thou art just" (Tennyson).

III. TO BE WITH CHRIST IS BEST, 2 Corinthians 5.6-8. "We are therefore always of good courage, because we know that while we live in this earthly body we are away from the Lord (for now we live by faith, not by sight); we are full of courage, I repeat, and are ready to put off this earthly body that we may be at home with the Lord." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Paul wrote the Philippians: "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better."

"Absent from the body, at home with the Lord. Just a change of residence from the tabernacle which suggests a pilgrimage, to the house which suggests settlement; from the body, which is after all but the probationary schoolhouse of the spirit, to union with the Lord, which is the realization of all that for which we are now in process of training" (G. Campbell Morgan).

IV. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, 2 Corinthians 5.9, 10. "Wherefore whether living or dead when he comes—whether at home with him or alive and away from him,—our aim is to be well-pleasing unto him, for we all must be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, our characters revealed, that each one may receive his due wages for what he has done in life, whether it has been good or bad." Then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds, Mt. 16.27. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, Gal. 6.7.

"The dying moment is the falling due of a bill. At this fatal instant one feels the coming home of a diffused responsibility. That which has been complicates that which will be. The past returns and enters into the future" (Victor Hugo).

V. OUR FUTURE DESTINY, 1 John 3.2, 3. "Beloved," writes the apostle John, "now are we children of God, and it has not yet been disclosed to us what we shall be." We have the assurance of Jesus that we shall be with him in our Father's house, but we have not been given any knowledge of the nature of our future existence. "The word translated 'children' here is characteristic of John, and implies community of nature, whereas the term 'sons' as used by Paul suggests the privileged condition of heirship" (Dummelow).

"The present is the prophet of the future. Some men say, 'Ah! now are we, but we shall be—nothing! John does not think so. John thinks that if a man is a son of God he will always be so. There are three things in this verse, how, if we are God's own, our sonship makes us quite sure of the future; how our sonship leaves us largely in ignorance of the future, but how our sonship flings one bright, all-penetrating beam of light on the only important thing about the future, the clear vision of and the perfect likeness to him who is our life.

"Anything seems to me more credible than that a man who can look up and say, 'My Father,' shall be crushed by what befalls the mere outside of him; anything seems to me to be more believable than to suppose that the nature which is capable of these elevating emotions and aspirations of confidence and hope, which can know God and yearn after him, and can love him, is to be wiped out like a gnat by the finger of Death. 'We are the sons of God,' therefore we shall always be so, in all worlds, and whatsoever may become of this poor wrappage in which the soul is shrouded" (Alexander Maclaren).

"We know that if he (it, Revised Version) shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." "The argument is twofold: (1) the vision of God implies likeness to him in character and affection (Mt. 5.8); (2) the vision of God transfigures (2 Cor. 3.18) even in this life" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

"Even now we can rejoice in the faint beginning of that likeness. There are some things which he hates which we also hate, some things which he loves which we are coming to love. Divinely and feebly, his light begins to shine in us. In those faint outlines is the promise of the full likeness" (Cleland B. McAfee).

"And every one who has this hope of being like Christ strives to be pure here even as he is pure." "The duty of every one in view of his appearing before God, his presentation to the King, is, like the worshipers before the Feast (Jn. 11.55), like the people before the Lord's manifestation at Sinai (Ex. 19.10, 11). It is his own work, not God's, or rather it is his and God's, Phil. 2.12, 13" (Expositor's Greek Testament). "He who looks forward to becoming like God hereafter must strive after his likeness now" (Westcott).

"The highest revelations of the New Testament are intensely practical. Its light is at once set to work. The profoundest things that the Bible has to say are said to you and me, not that we may know only, but that knowing we may do, and do because we are. If you expect, and expecting, hope to be like Jesus Christ yonder, you will be trying your best to be like him here. It is not the new purifying influence of hope that is talked about, but it is the specific influence of this one hope, the hope of ultimate assimilation to Christ leading to strenuous efforts, each a partial resemblance to him, here and now.

"Do not fancy that there is any magic in coffins and shrouds to make men different from their former selves. The continuity runs clear on, the rail goes through without a break, though it goes through the Mount Cenis tunnel; and on the one side is the cold of the North, and on the other the sunny South. The man is the same man through death and beyond.

"So the one link between sonship here and likeness to Christ hereafter is this link of present, strenuous effort to become like him day by day in personal purity. It is the pure in heart that shall see God in Christ" (Alexander Maclaren).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

In my father's house are many mansions, Jn. 14.2. The image is derived from those vast oriental palaces, in which there is an abode not only for the sovereign and the heir to the throne, but also for all the sons of the kings, however numerous they may be.—Godet.

I go to prepare a place for you, Jn. 14.2. This figure is derived from the custom of sending forward one of a party to secure quarters and provide all requisites.—Marcus Dods.

The earthly house of our tabernacle, 2 Corinthians 5.1. It is natural to think of the temporary character of the tabernacle used by the Chosen People in the desert

wanderings, but the use of *tabernacle* as a depreciatory term for the bodily frame is borrowed from the Pythagorean philosophy.—Expositor's Greek Testament.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Background of John 14.1-3. It is late on Thursday evening before the crucifixion. Jesus and his disciples are in the upper room in Jerusalem, and the disciples are looking dumbly and despairingly at their Lord. He has just told them of his approaching betrayal and denial by members of their own little group, and that he is going away where they cannot follow him. He seeks to comfort his agitated disciples, and tenderly utters the beautiful words of our text.

The Background of 2 Corinthians 5.1-10. In the preceding chapter of this letter Paul has been declaring that although weakened in body he is encouraged by the thought that while the temporal is transient, the spiritual is eternal. In our text the trend of his thought is continued, as he speaks of the earthly body being replaced by a heavenly body.

The Background of 1 John 3.2, 3. The great theme of the First Epistle of John is fellowship with God. In the first chapter he tells us that God is light, and bids us walk in the light. In the second chapter he tells us that God is righteous, and the evidence of our divine sonship is the doing of righteousness. In our verses from the third chapter he bids us hope that we shall hereafter be like God in Christ.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: Matthew 25.34-40, 46; 1 Thessalonians 4.16-18.

One of the most striking traits of the teaching of Jesus is its reticence concerning many things which one would like to know. The disciples bring him their questions about his own fate and he answers, "Let not your heart be troubled: I go to prepare a place for you." They ask him whither he is going, and he replies, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you"—as though it were not necessary that he should tell them more. Finally, he explains this reserve of teaching by adding: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

How profound a lesson there is in this reticence of Jesus. Many a teacher has failed of his task because he has tried to impart too much, and has not been able to say to his pupils: "I have other things to teach, but ye cannot bear them now." Many a religious movement has failed because it demanded certainty about uncertain things, and left no room for reticence, reserve, or growth. It is the same with Christian discipleship. It can afford to be ignorant of many things. Its heart is not troubled. The loyal disciple goes his way in the companionship of his Master, without excessive curiosity, and across the silences of life the Teacher says, "If it were not so, I would have told you."—Francis Greenwood Peabody.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

BEAUTY AND POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

Beginning the Lesson. Have you read Hugh Walpole's novel, The Secret City, which deals with happenings in Petrograd during the revolution? And do you recall the words of one of the characters which were called forth by the scenes of violence and death in the streets of "the secret city"? "There may be another life,—who can really prove there isn't?" he questions. "And when you've seen something in the very thick and glow of existence, more alive than life itself, and click! it's gone,—well, it must have gone somewhere, mustn't it? Not the body only, but that soul, that spirit, that individual, personal expression of beauty and purity and loveliness? Oh, it must be somewhere yet, it must be!"

In these words the novelist is voicing the cry of every Christian heart. This life cannot be the be all and end all of existence. There must be a life beyond. The beauty and power of the Christian's hope is the special topic given us today. The word *hope* is not strong enough: let us change it to *belief*. The Christian *believes* in immortality. Our texts today give us reasons for this belief in the words of Jesus, Paul and John.

What Jesus Taught about the Future Life. Jesus said much of the future life, but he taught more about it by what he did not say.

As circumstantial evidence may be, and often is, in every respect as substantial and convincing as direct evidence, so the argument from silence may be as valid as any verbal proof, or power of logic. It is like the "argument by withdrawal." For example, if you have a theory that a certain stone in an archway is an essential part of the structure, and if one who has a theory that it is not a necessary part removes it, and if at once the structure falls or is manifestly in danger of falling, or obviously imperfect, you need not call witnesses to confirm your theory. It is confirmed "by withdrawal." In law, certain documents are to be construed in such and such a way in the absence of any provision to the contrary. That is to say, certain factors are read into the paper because they are, by assumption, already there.

In the common affairs of daily life and communication, we interpret silence of a certain kind as equivalent to speech. You left home for business at eight o'clock in the morning. You met your wife for luncheon at twelve. How do you know the children were well when your wife left home? You never even inquired. You answer, "I know that all was well, for had it not been so she would have told me." What an eloquent interpreter of silence you are!

Your boy went to college in September. He had enough money to pay his tuition, buy his books and pay his board for three months. He seemed entirely willing to go, trusting you to send him a remittance for his second term, asking for no bond to guarantee his continuance at college. He knew you expected to help him all through his course: if it were not so you would have told him.

Now Jesus believed in a future life. He never took time to reason it out with his disciples. But he talked to them as if the future life were as certain as the present; as if the earth were but one of many dwelling places God has prepared for his children. He spoke of his plans for the future as if all time were his. He talked of centuries and ages as we speak of minutes and days. He acted as if death were not more than passing into another room.

Our confidence in immortality cannot possibly be founded as that of Jesus was. He saw the whole circle of life, whereas we see but a little segment, a broken arc. Like Plato and like Paul, we must reason out our faith. But our confidence may be kindled by Christ's confidence. He was One who never doubted.

I stood on the banks of the Potomac one morning in March. The river was cold, and the air was warm, and the mist rose from the river and concealed the tops of the tallest buildings. I looked at the Washington Monument. It seemed to end about two hundred feet above the ground. If I had not seen it before in its completion, I might have judged two hundred feet to be the height of the shaft, but I knew it as higher than that. Indeed, I had ascended it, and it took but a moment of time for imagination to reconstruct the invisible part of the monolith. It was an unbroken shaft, even though the larger part of it was invisible. Such was Jesus's view of life. The mists of death never obscured its unbroken continuity.

Death is the result of organic change. The spirit is not organic. What, then, can death do? It can release the spirit. That is all.

You may take a berth on a southbound train in the midst of a snowstorm. The last sounds you hear will be the furious wind and dashing sleet. In the morning you will awake in a land of soft breezes and blue skies. In another day you will see the orange trees in bloom and hear the mocking birds make melody in the silvery dawn.

It is a parable of life and death. There is an old prayer beginning, "O thou who callest thy people to pass through death that they may see thy face." Jesus confirms the longing and indicates the hope which others have laboriously striven to prove probable. And unless we are greatly deceived he did "pass through death," he did emerge unhurt, and lives until this day in the Heaven of Heavens, and in that kingdom he has set up in pure and humble hearts.—Condensed from The Distinctive Ideas of Jesus, by Charles Carroll Albertson.

The Body Is not, but the Spirit still Is. Ten of the most popular English novelists have recently been interrogated concerning their attitude to religion, and with scarcely an exception they have replied by explaining their attitude to a future life; thus tacitly assuming that the real root of all religion is a belief in a future life. Mr. Wells bluntly says, "All religious dogma assumes that there is a future life"; and Mr. Hugh Walpole declares that the source of his own religion is that he is conscious in himself "of some other life beyond the physical one." I believe that these statements express the thought of average mankind about religion; religion is the expression of that other life beyond the physical, and its sanction is the conviction of an eternal world beyond this transient world. And, as a matter of fact,

we do, all of us, habitually think in this way. Thus, when we think of the great thinkers, heroes and leaders of the past, we habitually think of them in the terms of the spirit and not of the body. No one, thinking of Grant, thinks of Grant's Tomb; he thinks of the imperturbable spirit of Grant, moving through fields of death and havoc to the accomplishment of enduring purposes. No one, thinking of Lincoln. thinks of the grave at Springfield; he thinks of Lincoln, the martyr-spirit, the prophet-soul, who led and still leads his nation by the wisdom of his words, and his supreme consecration to lofty ideals. No one thinks of Paul, or Savonarola, or Luther, or Shakespeare, or Milton as body presences, but as spiritual presences. We think of them as going on, because we can think of them in no other way. We distinguish between the body they tenanted, and the spirit, the will, the genius which acted through the body. And when we think of our own dead, we rarely think of their graves; we think rather of the force, the beauty, the charm, the character, the wise speech and tender affections, which made them what they were to us. The *body* is not, but *they* still are: they have passed out, but they have also passed on.—From a Sermon by W. J. Dawson.

An Astronomer's Faith. An interview with Henry Norris Russell, Professor of Astronomy at Princeton University, was published by The New York Times. "Do you believe in the immortality of the soul? Do you think that the spirit lives after the body dies?" the reporter questioned.

"Certainly, I do!" was the answer.

"Well," the man said, "that is rather strange!" He picked up a candle on the table, and blew it out. "Now," he said, "it looks to me as if after I blew that flame out that the light is gone. Isn't it?"

"Yes," said Professor Russell, "but it is not destroyed. You have separated the flame from the wax on which it was burning. Do you realize that that light which you have puffed out is this minute a million miles from here and still traveling on? You have not blown out the light. More than that, if you had instruments delicate enough you could discover the light of that candle out in space through endless time. You could distinguish it from all light of the stars. Why," he said, "only in 1918 we astronomers had the great experience of studying a star that has been dark since the Norman Conquest, and the light has just arrived here. Thousands of years ago the light separated itself from that mass that has been dark ever since, and the light has been traveling all this time, and only just came to us, and we have been able to tell much about that dark body from this light. You know," Professor Russell said, "you say of a body lying there without apparently any life, that it is dead. The spirit has left it. But as to where the spirit is, Physical Science cannot say. I think that the spirit lives on in its proper realm, distinct, progressing forever."

"What are your reasons, Dr. Russell, for believing in the life after death?" the reporter questioned.

He replied, "Not so much because of the justice of God, but because I believe, and my experience as a scientist has taught me to believe, in the bounty of God. I have observed that our imaginations are always surpassed by the reality. I have observed that for generations and centuries man dreamed of a sky that had ten thousand stars in it, but we scientists have shown millions and millions of stars, and at least two universes beyond this one, which surpass the greatest imagination of man. Men thought for a time, for many years, that God made the world in six days,—a very mechanical world. Now we know that for millions and millions of years with infinite patience and majesty he has been working this out. It surpasses the dreams of man. Men, Christians, today are dreaming of the life that is to come, and my experience as a scientist teaches me to look up, and to expect that the reality will be beyond all that we have thought."

What Does the Hope of the Future Life Do for you? A great deal of the religious contemplation of a future state is pure sentimentality, and like all pure sentimentality is either immoral or non-moral. But here in the First Epistle of John two things are brought into clear juxtaposition, the bright hope of Heaven and the hard work done here below. Now is that what the gleam and expectation of a future life does for you?

Is that your type of Christianity? Is that the kind of inspiration that comes to you from the hope that streaks in upon you in your many hours when sorrows, and cares, and changes, and love, and disappointments, and hard work weigh you down, and you say, "It would be blessed to pass hence?" Does it set you harder at work

than anything else can do? Is it all utilized? Or, if I might use such an illustration, is it like the electricity of the Aurora Borealis, that paints your winter sky with vanishing, useless splendor of crimson and blue? Or have you got it harnessed to your tramcars, lighting your houses, driving sewing-machines, doing practical work in your daily life? Is the hope of Heaven, and of being like Christ, a thing that stimulates and stirs us every moment to heroisms of self-surrender and to the strenuous martyrdom of self-cleansing?—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

For Discussion. 1. Putting on Immortality. See The Outlook for Nov. 2, 1912.

2. Why we may believe in life after death. See book with this title by C. E. Jefferson.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR HEAVENLY HOME

Beginning the Lesson. "What are we going to do in the world to come?" was a question asked of Dr. Cadman in one of his Sunday afternoon radio talks.

"Carry on as we are carrying on here," was his quick answer. "And we shall, too, under better conditions," he added.

This is what we all like to believe about our life hereafter. In our lesson today are gathered three paragraphs from different parts of the New Testament upon the subject of our heavenly home. Who spoke the words from John 14? Who wrote the words in 2 Corinthians 5.1-10? In 1 John 3.2, 3?

In My Father's House are Many Mansions. A mountain climber was overtaken by a heavy snowstorm. After wandering blindly about for many hours, he was about to give up the struggle and was sinking down into what would have been his last slumber when a picture of his home flashed into his mind. "I must see my home again," he thought, and the thought gave him new will power. He arose, stumbled on with the last of his reserve strength and succeeded in reaching an inn. The thought of his home had saved him.

"In my Father's house are many mansions," Jesus told his troubled disciples, "and I am going there to prepare a place for you." What did he mean? The thought of home, where God and Christ are, where Christ will receive us unto himself, has given courage and strength to Christians on their journey through life, and has enabled them to live as seeing him who is invisible. Had there not been such a home, what did Jesus say he would have done?

The Green Gate. There is a phrase in a certain old prayer that likens the grave to a gate. It would be hard to find in all literature a figure of speech more deeply fraught with beauty and truth.

This is to be said of gates: they do not lead into blind alleys; nor do they open merely for the purpose of closing again. Whether they lead into winding roads or broad fields, somehow they always take the traveler somewhere. And so the old saints, serenely sure that death is but a brief halt in a long journey, chose their metaphor well.

From the very beginning the instinct of immortality has wrought in the heart of our race. It was the ancient custom of barbarous times to place food and arms in the warrior's grave for his use in the future world. The Egyptians thousands of years ago called the tomb "the house of eternity," and faintly hoped for survival in that house. As time went on the idea grew and strengthened. Old Job, weeping in the dust, took heart of grace to put a piteous question to the ages: "If a man die, shall he live again?" The cynical writer of Ecclesiastes broke his bitter musings on annihilation to say, against his will, as it were: "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." King David, grieving above the body of his little child, cried suddenly with happy tears, "I shall go to him!" and was comforted. Now and then some wistful seer caught a glimpse behind the veil; now and then humanity heard—in a psalmist's music or in a prophet's message—the clear, high note of immortality, as unmistakable as a trumpet call. Slowly with the passing of the centuries the instinct brightened to a dream, the dream became a hope.

Many doubted that hope; some denied it outright; some deemed it only a matter for intellectual curiosity. But a few clung to it because they must. And then in the very midst of their longings and speculations, their doubts and denials, the first Easter of the earth came to pass.

It is a strange story, that first Easter. But it is a simple one, too, with a hillside

garden for its quiet setting, and the time spring, and the hour break of day. An old story now. There are those who challenge it; there are those who repudiate it utterly; so men challenged and repudiated it two thousand years ago. But it shook kingdoms; it altered the course of history; upon its promise the heart of the world is stayed.

Henceforth for us there is a new significance in the springtime of the year and in dawns and in old April gardens. Nay, ever since the trembling faith of the ages was justified on that dim slope there is a new meaning in life itself. Now we can look upon the grave with altered eyes, seeing it clearly even through our tears, not as a grave, but as a green gate opening on eternal life.—Nancy Byrd Turner, in The Youth's Companion.

What We Know about the Life after Death. The universe is his Father's House, and in it there are many mansions, one of which shall be set aside for us: in this beautiful way Jesus tells us that there is a home awaiting us after death. And as it is a place which will be prepared by Jesus, we may be sure that it will be a happy place. At death we leave one home for a far more beautiful one.

There is life awaiting us. We are told that there will be "no night there," no more sorrow there, "all tears shall be wiped away." The life that knows no ending will have nothing to mar its brightness and joy. We may think of death as like the passing out from a cold, gloomy land into the blaze and beauty of tropical climes. It will be as great a change for us as it is for the little grub when it wakes one day to find that it has acquired a pair of wings and is no more doomed to crawl, but can soar away and live in the sunshine among the flowers.

There are tasks awaiting us. "His servants shall serve him," says John. It will be a place of rest, not of idleness, nor stagnation, but the rest of congenial and happy service. Some people think that when they die they will do nothing for ever and ever. Some boys and girls have imagined that in Heaven there will be no tasks nor lessons. But this is not John's idea. That Heavenly City, he says, is a busy city. The people do the King's business. And it is Christ's teaching. He says, "I go to prepare," that is, "I go to be busy." And we may be sure we shall be busy, too.

There is a reward awaiting us. "They see him face to face." At last we shall see God—see, as Tennyson puts it, "our pilot face to face." Further, we shall see him "as he is." We have never done that. We have only seen him as the poets, preachers and artists have painted him. Moreover, we shall "know," find the key to all our problems, be compensated for all our losses and sacrifices. We shall receive that to which our love and service and fidelity have entitled us. "To die is gain," says Paul.

What else awaits us in the life beyond, we can not tell. "What God has prepared for those that love him" none can guess. But we may be sure that there are other things, and that they are all as beautiful as those that have been mentioned.

The Christian's Belief.

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea,
Yet I know what the heather is like,
And what a wave must be.

I never talked with God,
I never visited in heaven,
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.—Emily Dickinson.

We Shall Each Receive our Reward according to What we Have Done, whether it Be Good or Bad. We do not know how soon our life here will be ended. We do not know what the life beyond will be like. We do know that we need not fear the future life if we make Christ our Friend and Guide here, and love and obey him. When the old negro servant of Andrew Jackson was asked after his master's death, whether he thought the General had gone to Heaven, he replied, "I don't know, marsa, but I reckon if he wanted to go, he went." If we want to inherit the kingdom prepared for us, we shall so live here that we shall hear the joyful words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

Sentence Sermons. Death is a glorious event to one going to Jesus.—Livingstone.

He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever,—John.

REVIEW: STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT: If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. John 14.15

DEVOTIONAL READING Revelation 7.9-17.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation and let all pupils who recognize the allusion signify this. Then ask some one to tell the lesson to which the allusion refers, or recall it by questions.

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.—Shakespeare.

May we never be deaf to the cry of the man from Macedonia, in whatever way his need is made known to us.

If your character is infatuated by love of praise, desire of money, eagerness for pleasures, the lust of revenge, the fear of dishonor, losses or death, the salt loses its savor.—Erasmus.

O thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray!—Montgomery.

To go through life and plead at the end of it that we have not broken any one of the commandments is but what the servant did who kept his talent carefully unspent, and yet was sent to outer darkness for his uselessness.—Froude.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian Sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.—Whittier.

To me nothing seems more natural than that the Son of Man should be carried of the Spirit into grim solitudes, and there confront the tempter.—Carlyle.

Japan has seen believers scattered abroad and many with one accord giving heed to the things that were spoken.

A REVIEW OF WORDS OF COUNSEL

Who said it?

Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I come not to call the righteous, but sinners.

Thy will be done.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Give, and it shall be given unto you.

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Ye are the light of the world.

He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.

With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself to walk even as he walked.

Thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God; a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.

Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.

Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

1. What Principles Should Govern our Lives if we are Christians?

2. In what Respects the World Is Better for the Life of ———. (In the dash write the name of some Christian whom you know.)

3. The Ideal Life. (A Review of Drummond's Book with this title.)

4. The Christian Conception of Prayer. 5. The Lord's Prayer and What it Means.

6. The Three Temptations of Jesus Explained. 7. How to Overcome Temptation.

8. What the Bible Teaches about the Future Life. 9. Christ's Program for the World.

10. Christian Missions the Hope of the World. 11. Love the Fulfilling of the Law.

12. Self-control for the Sake of Others. 13. How to Read and Study the Bible.

14. Christian Stewardship. 15. Unselfishness in the Home.

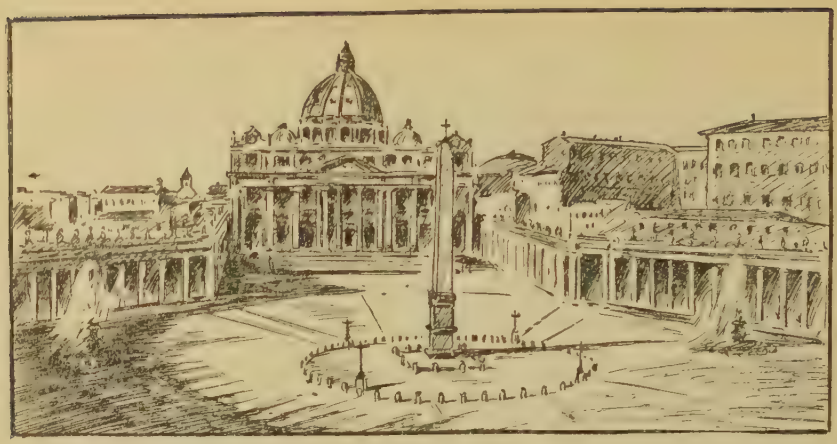
16. Privileges and Duties of Church Membership. 17. How to be Witnesses for Christ.

18. Some Marks of a Christian. 19. What It Means to Be a Christian.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. What did Jesus mean by "the Kingdom of God"? 2. What did he mean by saying the Kingdom was at hand? 3. What are some of the references in the Sermon on the Mount to the Kingdom of Heaven? 4. How does Christ call his followers today? 5. Should "Decision Day" be observed in our school? 6. Have you made the great decision?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Look up Luke 17.20, 21, which tells where the Kingdom of God is. 2. In Mt. 18.31 Jesus tells how one may enter the Kingdom: what is the way? 3. According to Mt. 4.18-22, what did the disciples give up when they obeyed the call of Jesus to follow him? 4. What did we learn in our first lesson of the year that following Jesus means? 5. Where is the Sea of Galilee? 6. Capernaum?



ST. PETER'S, ROME

SECOND QUARTER

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER

Aim: To discover, through a study of his Life and Letters, the contribution of Peter to Christian belief about Jesus, and how this belief should influence our lives.

LESSON I—APRIL 3

PETER BECOMES A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. Mark 1.17

LESSON Mark 1.14-18, 29-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-5

MARK 1.14 Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

16 And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they left the nets, and followed him. 19 And going on a little further, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. 18 And straightway they left the nets, and followed him.

29 And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her: 31 and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER BECOMES A DISCIPLE OF JESUS, verses 14-18. After John the Baptist was imprisoned and his work as a herald was over (Mt. 14.3-5; Lk. 3.19.20), Jesus went from Judæa to Galilee and there proclaimed the good news (the gospel) of God, and announced that the time had been fulfilled, the world was ready for the new order of things, and the Kingdom of God was at hand. More than a hundred times Jesus used the phrase "the Kingdom of God" or its equivalent: what did he mean by it? It is a phrase which in different passages seems to have different meanings, being now present and now future; but its usual meaning is as here, the rule of God in the hearts of men. Lo, the Kingdom is within you, Luke 17.21.

"Jesus came preaching that this Kingdom was at hand. Most of his teaching was conversational, but he preached four great sermons, all of which concerned the coming of the Kingdom. In the first, he announced that it was his mission to initiate this Kingdom. In the second, he interpreted the fundamental principles on which the Kingdom would be founded. In the third, he traced the method

Ernst Zimmerman

CHRIST AND THE FISHERMEN

and process of its development. In the fourth, he declared the secret of its power, a divinely inspired spirit of self-sacrifice in the heart of all its citizens. At the end of his life, in the Court of Caiaphas, he reaffirmed himself to be the long-expected Deliverer coming to establish this Kingdom of God on the earth. And after his resurrection his disciples went forth, not to teach a new ethics or a new philosophy, but to proclaim their faith in the Kingdom and in Jesus its Founder" (Lyman Abbott).

The King of the Kingdom of Heaven is God, and the members of his Kingdom are those who love and obey him. His Kingdom will come the world over when his will is done everywhere on earth as it is done in Heaven.

"Repent ye, and believe in the gospel," the good news that the Kingdom of God is near, was the exhortation of Jesus. "The new sense of sin is closely related to the advancing kingdom of God. This was the reason Jesus gave for calling on men to give up their sin and selfishness; 'repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Christ seldom spoke to men of the wickedness of that which they were doing, but of the greatness and beauty of that which they were missing. Change your minds, he seems to say, about the real prizes and pleasures of life, get into line with the things that count, for God's day is coming, slowly but surely his triumphant will is advancing to victory."

"To think what God is doing here on earth—making men in his own image, bringing forth a universal kingdom, of which righteousness and truth and peace shall be the atmosphere, in which all men shall be brothers under one great Father—to think what God is doing, and then to think what most of us are doing; to think earnestly the thoughts of God after him for the men and women around us, and then to think our own: this is to feel the new sense of sin, and it stings and rebukes and renews as the mopings of monks and the scourgings of ascetics could never do in this age"(Alexander MacColl).

And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon (who is called Peter, Mt. 4.18), and Andrew his brother, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers. See Lesson I of the First Quarter. "Come ye after me," Jesus called. They had been called before, and had companied with Jesus for a time. It is thought that Peter and Andrew had not been with him during the early Judæan ministry, because the Gospel of Mark, which, it is believed, was based on Peter's testimony, omits all mention of it. Now at the beginning of his Galilean ministry, Jesus called the four fishermen to permanent discipleship, the nucleus of his band of twelve intimate followers.

What was the reward which Jesus promised? "I will make you to become fishers of men." There was to be no reward, only the opportunity of being trained in the skill of winning other followers for Christ. "Companionship with Jesus would develop power to win fresh recruits. He, the Great Magnet, could make them magnets, too. They already knew the wonder of his attractiveness. Here was the promise that they, too, could learn how to attract others. There was a promise in the same breath as a summons, and it was a promise that would appeal to men conscious of slumbering powers. They were to enter on an apprenticeship to a new kind of fishing, and the catch was to be their fellow men."

Peter and Andrew straightway left their nets and followed Jesus. They were willing to make the sacrifice that leaving home and occupation meant, though as yet they did not fully know the greatness of their Teacher. How Peter learned in the school of Christ, and how he became a most successful fisher of souls for his Master, we shall see during our Quarter's lessons.

The lesson Peter learned we may learn. Following Jesus means entering his service. We are not following him unless we are doing what he would have us do. He who changed ordinary fishermen into great apostles and leaders is still making strong, noble lives out of ordinary people.

II. PETER SEES THE POWER OF JESUS, verses 29-31. From the synagogue, where he had taught and astonished the people by the fact that he taught them as One having authority and not as the scribes, and where he had astonished them still further by healing a demon-possessed, Jesus went home with Peter, and with them were also James and John and Andrew. They found the home in great anxiety, for the mother of Peter's wife was ill with a fever, which is to this

day a common illness in the region about the Sea of Galilee. At once they told Jesus of their trouble.

" 'They tell him of her.' Ah! There are a great many things in our lives which, though we ought to know Jesus Christ better than the first disciples at first did, scarcely seem to us fit to be turned into subjects of petition, partly because we have wrong notions as to the sphere and limits of prayer, and partly because they seem to be such transitory things that it is a shame to trouble him about such insignificant matters. Well, go and tell him, at any rate. I do not think that Christians ought to have anything in their heads or hearts that they do not take to Jesus Christ, and it is an uncommonly good test—and one very easily applied—of our hopes, fears, purposes, thoughts, deeds, and desires—'Should I like to go and make a clean breast of it to the Master?' " (Alexander Maclaren).

Quickly Jesus brought relief and happiness. He took the sick woman by the hand and raised her up. The fever left her, and renewed strength came so that she who had been ministered to ministered to others. "The working of healing miracles cannot be explained; that is, we cannot tell how they are done. Sometimes the Gospels represent them as answers to Jesus's prayers (Mk. 9.29; 11.23; Jn. 11.42). Sometimes they speak as if the healing power resided in him as electricity might in a body charged with it, and as if it could be tapped by a believing touch, though not without his knowledge (Mk. 5.28, 29). Always it was a power personal to Jesus, not dependent on medicine or regimen; he heals by his own power; also, as the Gospels often show us, at his own expense. The divinest saying about these miracles is Mt. 8.17—'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness': what it means is that the healings were works of love as well as of power" (James Denney).

"So many a life is one long fever—
A fever of anxious suspense and care,
A fever of getting, a fever of fretting,
A fever of hurrying here and there.

It may be a fever of restless serving,
With hearts all thirsty for love and praise,
And eyes all aching and strained with yearning
Toward self-set goals in the future days.

Or it may be a fever of pain and anger,
When the wounded spirit is hard to bear,
And only the Lord can draw forth the arrows
Left carelessly, cruelly rankling there.

Whatever the fever, his touch can heal it;
Whatever the tempest, his voice can still.
There is only joy as we seek his pleasure,
There is only rest as we choose his will."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was the occupation of Peter when called by Jesus to follow him? What greater sort of fishing did Jesus promise Peter? What do we mean when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come"? What is the third petition of the Lord's Prayer?

The Background of the Lesson. Jesus made Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee his home during his public ministry. Two sites about two miles apart on the northwestern shore of the lake, Tell Hum and Khan Ninyeh, are claimed as its location.

Jesus began his Galilean ministry by calling his disciples. In the events of the Sabbath day following their acceptance of the call to become permanently his followers, they had a glimpse of the depth and breadth and power of their Master's sympathy and of his readiness to sacrifice himself for the needs of others. The art of relieving suffering was part of their education. As has been said, unless the fishers of men heal and pity, as well as teach and preach, they do not really "come after Christ." That Sabbath day has been called "A Wonderful Sabbath in the Life of Jesus," so crowded was it with good works. The curing of Peter's mother-in-law is the only incident which we have time to study.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Most Church schools have a special "Decision Day," for which careful preparation is made throughout several preceding Sundays. Our text today lends itself admirably for such a time of decision; it not only offers pupils an opportunity thoughtfully to decide to become a Christian, but offers the teacher an opportunity to test his teaching, to find out whether or not his teaching of the studies in the Christian Life, last Quarter, has borne fruit.

"We are sometimes asked if it is necessary for children reared in Christian homes to be converted," Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown writes. His answer is: "It certainly is,—every one must be converted in order to enter the Kingdom of God. And for such a child conversion means the conscious, deliberate acceptance for himself of that mode of life to which he has been reared. When his attitude toward Christ is no longer mere custom or habit into which he has been led by those who love him, but his own glad, voluntary choice as well, then that new attitude constitutes his conversion. It is the conscious turning of the soul toward the mercy and the service of God. The coming of that conscious personal decision may occupy a few vital moments in some spiritual crisis in the child's life, or it may stretch through months or years of growth. It matters not—whenever the voluntary turning of the soul to God and the joyous acceptance of his service as the highest mode of life arrive, the child enters through his own gate into the city."

Two hundred Christian workers were asked the age at which they made the great decision. Twenty of them made it at or under ten years of age; seventy-five between eleven and fifteen; sixty-one between sixteen and twenty; twenty-six between twenty-one and twenty-five; ten between twenty-six and thirty; eight between thirty-one and thirty-nine.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

ANSWERING CHRIST'S CALL

Beginning the Lesson. Instead of hurling himself from the pinnacle of the temple and calling all men to witness that his miraculous escape from death proved him to be the Messiah, instead of any spectacular display of power, Jesus began his ministry in Galilee so quietly and unostentatiously that no one knew the Messiah was in their midst, engaged upon a work that was to revolutionize the world. He told the people to repent, to change their way of living; he gathered a little band of followers and began teaching them; he told them that they were to teach others, through their fellowship with him they would learn how to bring others into the Kingdom of God.

Peter and Andrew were not extraordinary men. They were not remarkable for education or culture or position or wealth. They were ordinary fishermen when Jesus called them to be his disciples. There were, however, great possibilities in them, as there are in most so-called "common folks." Dr. Fosdick instances these able men as coming from unlikely ranks: "Shakespeare was the son of a bankrupt butcher and of a woman who could not write her name; Beethoven was the son of a consumptive mother, herself a daughter of a cook, and a father who was a confirmed drunkard; Faraday, perhaps the greatest scientific experimenter of all times, was born over a stall, his father an invalid blacksmith and his mother a common drudge, and he without education, sold papers upon the streets of London. So true is the fact that there are unsuspected possibilities in common folk that Jesus built his ministry upon it. He called four fishermen as his first followers."

The Lightning Decision. And straightway they left their nets and followed him. We must not let the mist of the intervening centuries blur for us the strain which our Lord put on these men's already awakened loyalty. The point to keep clearly before us is that he could have found easily enough some hour of leisure in which to secure their adherence. Of set purpose he calls them from the midst of their labor. He tested them to see if there was something uncalculating in their devotion to him. It was consecrated recklessness he desired to find and found.

That was the treasure he sought with a great eagerness, that was the treasure he prized wherever found. Mary breaking the vase of precious ointment over his head revealed the same spirit which he asked from his first adherents. The complete self-surrender of life was Jesus's demand. All of us know that just here is where ordinary righteousness is lacking. It is righteousness with a saving clause.

We follow it just so far as it does not involve a complete sacrifice of self-interest. Some draw the line in one place and some in another, but everybody somewhere.

Jesus, seeing more clearly than any other the sacrifice involved, undertook the work of absolute righteousness and carried it out to the end. For his helpers, he needed men who, at least in some measure, were prepared to share his spirit of utmost loyalty. For them, the test was utmost loyalty to himself. Hence his demand for a lightning decision. He won it.—R. C. Gillie.

What Led the Disciples to Answer Christ's Call. The first disciples came to Jesus because they supposed him to be the Messiah, who would inaugurate the Kingdom of God with its religious and pŏlitical glory so fondly hoped for by the people. The conviction that he was the Messiah may have been stronger in some than in others. Men like Levi, who became disciples a little later and apparently without any previous connection with John the Baptist, probably had less definite ground than had the first disciples for such a conviction. Levi may have seen in Jesus that which made him conjecture his Messiahship, but possibly he saw in him only a great prophet; for either conception would account for his readiness to accept discipleship. But, even in the case of the first disciples, the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah was largely tentative and sorely needed confirmation. They eagerly waited to see him do the things the Messiah was expected to do.

A second influence that drew the disciples about Jesus may well have been the power of his personality. The relation of discipleship was gradually formed. It advanced by natural stages, and did not become fixed in the form of apostleship until the men had been given considerable opportunity to become acquainted with Jesus.

It was largely through what he was in his own personal life that he endeavored to displace their conception of the Kingdom of God by the one that lay in his own mind. What God's Kingdom is depends upon what God is; and their conception of God's Kingdom was determined by their conception of God. Jesus's purpose was to give these men, through his own personality, such a conception of God as would effect that necessary change in their conception of his Kingdom. It was this that he had in mind when, at the end of the period of discipleship, he said to one of them: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

A hint as to what the qualities were that most strongly attracted the disciples to him is afforded by the brief characterization of him made long after by one of their first disciples: "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

In combination with this "grace" and "truth" there was also a certain masterfulness that attracted and held those who came receptively within the sphere of his style of synagogue address, for all noted that he "spake with authority."

These three fundamental characteristics of his personality—friendliness, honesty, and masterfulness—"grace," "truth," and "authority"—increasingly exhibited through all his career, must at the very beginning have been somewhat operative in drawing the first disciples to him; and must have been among the influences which held them to him in the dark days when he was so disappointing to them as a Messiah. —Condensed from an Article in The Biblical World, by E. I. Bosworth.

The Great Adventure. Peter's life turned upon the golden hinge of that moment when he left all to follow Christ. This moment he is unknown; the next he has stepped out into the light of the centuries and the ages. This moment he is a humble fisherman on an obscure lake; the next his life is like the flag-ship of a great admiral, going into a vast world-battle. What an adventure! What an astounding career! perhaps you will say, but this adventure of Peter was unique, solitary, unshared. Behold the wonder—in the place where Cæsar once sat, Peter is enthroned and the proudest temple in the world bears his name. But if the statue of the fisherman stands under the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, let us not forget that beneath the soil of Rome are miles of Catacombs, where those sleep whose lives were equally touched with the spirit of divine adventure. They also were humble persons, living ordinary lives, until they obeyed the call of Christ; from that moment they also climbed the steep ascent of heaven, finding in swift death swift glory, and in killing flames the fiery chariot of God. And in similar ways the call of Christ, obeyed in absolute faith, has again and again produced an enormous enlargement of the uses and capacities of life in humble men. Grenfell is no one till

he finds Christ; from that hour he moves upon the path of greatness. William Booth is no one till he obeys the call of Christ to larger service; from that moment the man grows in moral and intellectual stature, till he towers above his age, as its most commanding figure. There is no telling to what greatness a man may grow if he will but yield himself utterly to the will of Christ; and of all adventures which may attract us there is no adventure so marvelous as following Christ.—W. J. Dawson.

The Youth of the World for Christ. Saul of Tarsus was a young man when he responded to the call of Christ, and the influence of that surrendered life has grown with the passing centuries. Wesley was a young man when he took his stand for Christ. Spurgeon was a village lad when a local preacher won him for Christ. Moody was a young shop-assistant when he answered the supreme call. Think of the hundreds of thousands of men and women the world over who were won for Christ through the instrumentality of those four young men, and the imagination staggers at the suggestion of winning the young manhood of the world for the same glad service. And when we remember that the men who are guiding the affairs of the world today were the young men of yesterday, and that the young men of today will take their place tomorrow, we are able to estimate, to some extent, the value of such an enterprise to the young men themselves, to the community, and to the church. Indeed, it is only when we thus recognize the sublimity of the subject in its personal, national and spiritual relationships that we find our full inspiration for the task.—S. E. Burrow.

The Master Needs Your Help. Have you ever noticed the picture in the word "follow"? You remember that the earliest language was picture language. And it is a great help sometimes to dig down under a word and get the picture. Here, it is a man standing on a roadway, earnestly beckoning, and pointing to the road he is in. The Old Testament word means literally "same road." The very word the Master himself used means "in behind."

Today this wondrous Lord Jesus stands just ahead. His face still shows where the thorns cut and the thongs tore. But there is a marvelous tenderness and pleading in those great, patient eyes. His hand is reached out beckoning, and you cannot miss the hole in the palm of it. The hand points to the road he trod for us. And his voice calls pleadingly, "Take this same road; get in behind. I need your help with my world."—S. D. Gordon, in Quiet Talks on Following The Christ.

Why Some Fail to Find the Road. What is it which makes one unable to find the way of Jesus? It is, for the most part, either unwillingness to make a serious effort to find it, or disinclination to accept the consequences of the choice. To take up with some philosophical novelty, involving no demand upon the will; to surrender oneself to the pleasures of life; to attach oneself, with superficial and unreflecting devotion, to some form of church or sect;—how much easier is any one of these refuges of the mind than serious meditations on the great problems of life and the growth of a personal conviction! And yet, how unmistakable have been the joy, and the strength to live and die, and the peace of mind and sense of right adjustment to the universe, which those have found who have followed with patience the way!—Carl Hiltz, in Happiness.

Answer the Call Today. We ought to decide. The matter of our relation to Christ and our service for him cannot be kept an open question. On that question we are bound to take sides. There is no room for shuffling or evasion. Men are for Christ, or they are against Christ.

What it is right to do, it is right to do now. What it is right to be, it is right to be now. It is wrong not to do it now and to be it now. Our characters are not what we promise to be or to do. They are what we do and are. Now is the only time that character knows. Be Christ's follower today. Do Christ's will today.

It is told of Darwin, that once in his study he took up a pencil and laid it upon the long tendrils of a passion plant on the table before him. The leaf at once began to roll around the pencil. Just before it had clasped the pencil close, he drew it away. Again he laid it upon the leaf, and again it responded, but more slowly. And again, just as it was about to close, he drew the pencil away. And so again and again. And each time the plant responded, but more hesitantly, until at last, hardened by the deceitfulness of failure, it ceased to respond. And so our souls. Again and again the Savior comes, and again and again the soul reaches for him, but each time with less longing and love, until at last, hardened by the deceit-

fulness of sin, they are dead and unresponsive to his touch. Today harden not your hearts. Decide today.

If you have decided, win a friend to decision today.—Robert E. Speer.

Follow Me.

Today One stands where we fret and toil,
With wearied faces or hands a-soil
With greed and grasping.—He comes again,
As long, long since to those dark-faced men.
Oh, blessed coming—to me, to you!
He speaks again—and his words are two!—Bertha Gerneaux Woods.

For Discussion. Is Christianity individualistic? See Christian Citizenship, by Francis J. McConnell.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What miracle had Jesus wrought for the multitude? 2. Why did Jesus need to constrain the disciples to leave? 3. What causes sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee? 4. In what respects was Peter's venturesomeness good? 5. In what respects was it bad? 6. What does this incident tell us about Peter? 7. What did Peter learn by the incident?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

MAKING THE GREAT DECISION

Beginning the Lesson. Every pope of Rome has a signet ring with which he seals important documents. His name is engraved upon it, and when he dies it is broken and a new one is made for his successor. But upon all the rings there is a figure representing Peter in a fishing-boat, holding a fishing-line. The popes, you know, claim to be successors of Peter. Why do their rings have this figure upon them?

How Peter Made his Decision. There is a story of a fifteen-year-old girl whose aunt told her she needed to learn obedience according to St. Mark. The girl was much puzzled; what could her aunt mean? "Bring your Bible and see what sort of obedience this is," her aunt bade.

When Dorothy returned with her Bible she was told to look up Mark 1.18. "And straightway they left their nets, and followed him," Dorothy read.

"Now the second chapter and twelfth verse." "And immediately he arose."

"The same word as 'straightway,' Dorothy," said her aunt. "Now the fifth chapter and forty-second verse." "And straightway the damsel arose."

"The sixth chapter and forty-fifth verse." "And straightway—" the girl began; "Aunt Dolly, are there many more?"

"A great many more. But are not these enough to make you understand what I mean by obedience according to St. Mark?" Dorothy was silent a moment, and then she said: "I wish I could be 'straightway' obedient."

Peter was straightway obedient to the call of Jesus. He was ready to give up everything to follow Jesus and learn how to become a fisher of men. What did Jesus mean when he promised that he should learn this?

How Three People Made the Great Decision. There was a young Japanese who was like the merchant in the parable in his search for the pearl of great price. One day he found a leaf from the Bible that told about God. He asked some one if he knew where God was. This man directed him to a dock where there was an American ship and told him that the Americans could tell him about God. He asked the captain, who was not a Christian, and the captain sent him to the owner of the ship. The latter said that he could not tell him much about the matter, but if he would ship with him as a sailor he would take him to the United States, and place him in care of a man who believed in God and would tell him about him. The young man went with the owner to Boston, and his search for God was so earnest that the owner placed him in an institution for education. He found the pearl of great price after a long search and is now one of the most distinguished teachers in Japan.

When Wendell Phillips was asked how he found God, he replied: "When I was a boy of fourteen years of age, in the old church at the North End, I heard Lyman Beecher preach on the theme, 'You belong to God.' I went home after that service, threw myself on the floor in my room, with locked doors, and prayed: 'O God,

I belong to thee. Take what is thine own. I ask this, that whenever a thing is wrong, it may have no power of temptation over me, and that whenever a thing is right, it may take no courage to do it.'" Thus Wendell Phillips entered the Kingdom, became a subject of its King, obedient to his will.

One day a girl of sixteen sat reading the life of a noble Christian woman. "That was a beautiful life," she said to herself as she finished the book. "And I should like to live such a life," she added after further thought. "Lord, I will try from this time onward," was her prayer a few moments later. She had entered the Kingdom.

The First Step. Phillips Brooks kept a book in which he wrote down the texts he intended to preach upon and a few words of comment beneath each one. The first text in the book was this, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And the comment was, "That willingness is the first Christian step."

The first Christian step was readily taken by Peter. He left his nets and followed Jesus. The call to take that step comes to every one. Here and there one is called to drop whatever work he is engaged upon and devote his life to God's service as minister or missionary or charity-worker, but most people are called to follow Christ in their school or home or place of business in such a way that their life, their example, and, when opportunity offers, their words, testify whose they are and whom they serve. "What must I do differently so that I shall please my Lord and Master?" is the question which every follower of Christ must ask and answer. He must willingly follow him.

"One might, to be sure, make up his mind to follow Jesus and yet not do it, just as one might decide to do anything else and later on change his mind. And so it is hardly correct to say that making up one's mind is everything. That is the first thing, but this action of the mind must show itself in conduct. One must not only make up his mind to follow Jesus, but he must begin forthwith to do it."

Once there was a fierce gale in Liverpool Harbor and it was too rough for the pilot to board a vessel in the Channel. He ran up the signal "Follow me," at the masthead of his pilot boat, and then sailed up the river with eight or nine vessels of all sorts and sizes following. Every vessel reached her dock safely; for all the helmsmen of the first steamer had to do was to keep his eye on the pilot boat and steer straight in the course she was taking, and all each of the other boats had to do was to follow the boat ahead. Our task is similar. Jesus sends us the signal, "Follow me," and if we follow in his lead, we shall reach our life's journey's end in safety.

Enlist now for Christian Service. A member of the G. A. R. was asked to give his experience in the war. Sadly he replied: "When the President first called for volunteers I refused to go, and even after the second call the company recruited from our town was miles away before I could decide to follow. I offered so late that I saw very little active service."

God is always calling boys and girls, young men and women, to enlist in his grand army. He is calling them for service in his Kingdom. There are many aged men and women enlisted today whose great regret is that they did not offer themselves when young, when they could have given their Great Commander a lifetime of service.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds used to give a coat of white paint to all the canvas he used for his pictures before commencing to work. He said it gave luminousness and brilliance to the whole picture. That is a little parable for you. You are just beginning to paint a life-picture. Let Jesus in to make the ground-work of your life white and pure."

Sentence Sermons. Where God is King, there is the Kingdom of God.

If you want to live a Christian life, do not delay taking the first step.

Destiny is being created by the choice you make now.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Give God thy talent, whole and fresh, to be increased by early devotion and a life-long fidelity in his service.—Horace Bushnell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whence came the multitude whom Jesus sent away, and why did he do this? (Mt. 14.13-22; Jn. 6.14, 15.) 2. What additional information about the disciples does Mark give in his account of the incident? (Mk. 6.51, 52.) 3. What does the word "constrain" mean? 4. What lessons did Peter learn on this occasion? 5. Tell about another storm on the Sea of Galilee, recorded in the Gospels. (Mk. 4.35-41.)

PETER'S LESSON IN TRUST

GOLDEN TEXT: Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Matthew 14.27

LESSON Matthew 14.22-33 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91.1-10

MATTHEW 14.22 And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. 23 And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone. 24 But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a ghost; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. 29 And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32 And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saynig, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER SEES THE POWER OF JESUS, verses 22-27. After the feeding of the Five Thousand the disciples sympathized with the desire of the multitude to make Jesus king (see The Historical Background), and were loth to leave the spot until he constrained them. He bade them enter the boat and cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee while he remained behind to disperse the crowd. When the crowd had departed, Jesus went up the mountain to pray. John tells us that Jesus, perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone (Jn. 6.12).

"Jesus was not always going about doing good. He could not; no man can. There comes a time when the doing is worthless and fruitless. No, Jesus was often away getting power, getting the virtue and the valor which enabled him and inspired him to do good. Sometimes he sent the multitudes away, sometimes he went away from the multitudes. He went, of course, in order to return. But he went, that is the point. He left the plain that in the mountain the drained powers might be renewed and recharged for use in refreshing the plain again" (Alexander McGaffin).

"I watch the Master take his way
Far up the mount, at break of day,
'Mid nature's quietude to pray;
And as I seem to see him there
I hear, with all my load of care,
'He calls thee to the mount of prayer' " (John R. Clements).

And when the even was come, he was there alone.

"When God speaks he likes no other voice to break the stillness but his own, hence the place that has always been given to solitude in all true religious life. It can be overdone, but it can be grossly underdone. And there is no lesson more worth insisting on in days like ours than this: when God wants to speak to a man he wants that man to be alone" (Henry Drummond).

The disciples had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs (three to three and a half miles), Jn. 6.19, when a storm arose and the boat was "distressed by the waves." In the fourth watch of the night, between three and six in the morning, the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in terror. The Jews believed in apparitions.

"If you cannot believe that Christ once walked on the water, may I remind you that he has been doing it all down the centuries—treading under foot hitherto unmastered elements, walking upon deep and erstwhile untrodden paths? He has ventured where others have been able to find no sure footing, and on deep waters he has made impossible progress" (G. Hartley Halloway).

Straightway Jesus spake unto them.

"And all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm" (Tennyson).

"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid," were the words the disciples heard.

"Jesu, Deliverer! come thou to me;
Soothe thou my voyaging over life's rough sea;
Then when the storm of death roars sweeping by
Whisper, O Truth of truth, 'Peace, it is I!' " (St. Anatolius).

II. PETER LEARNS A LESSON IN TRUST, verses 28-32. Peter, who, as Chrysostom observes, was "always ardent, and ever leaping before his fellows," called out, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the water." "Come," said Jesus. See the First Topic. Peter left the boat and began to walk toward Jesus, but when he saw the wind he was afraid.

"Peter walked on the water, but feared the wind: such is human nature, often acknowledging great things, and at fault in little things" (Chrysostom).

Peter began to sink and cried, "Lord, save me." Quickly Jesus stretched forth his hand and took hold of him. In John Bunyan's quaint words, "Peter went as far as his little faith would carry him; he also cried as far as his little faith would help: 'Lord, save me; I perish'; and so with coming and crying he was kept from sinking, though he had but little faith."

"There is a hand stretched out to you—a hand with a wound in the palm of it: reach out the hand of your faith to clasp it, and cling to it, for without faith it is impossible to please God" (Henry van Dyke).

"O thou of little faith," said Jesus, "wherefore didst thou doubt." The Greek word translated "doubt" means primarily "to look in two directions" uncertain which way to take, hence to waver, to doubt. As long as Peter looked only at Jesus, he was safe; when he began to look at the tumultuous waves he was afraid and began to sink. Trust always looks up, never down.

"The time and tone of Christ's gentle remonstrance are remarkable. Deliverance comes first, and rebuke afterward. Having first shown Peter, by the fact of his safety, that his doubts were irrational, Christ then, and not till then, puts his gentle question. Perhaps there was a smile on his face, as surely as there was love in his voice, that softened the rebuke and went to Peter's heart. What does Christ rebuke him for? Getting out of the boat? No. He does not blame him for venturing too much, but for trusting too little. He does not blame him for attempting something beyond his strength, but for not holding fast the beginning of his confidence firm to the end. And so the lesson for us is that we cannot expect too much if we expect it perseveringly" (Alexander Maclaren).

And when they were gone up unto the boat, the wind ceased.

We may be of good cheer, not because Jesus calms the storms of life, but because he gives us courageous hearts to endure the tumult.

Then the other disciples in the boat fell down and worshiped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Mark omits the incident about Peter and reports (6.51, 52) that "they were sore amazed in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their hearts were hardened." "Can it be that in Mark we have Peter's own self-reproach, his words at the dense stupidity which did not escape the charge, 'O thou of little faith!' " Dr. R. F. Horton questions.

"When Jesus came among men, he did not stand on a street corner and say: 'Look at me! I am the Son of God from heaven!' It was very seldom that Jesus told anybody he was the Son of God, or that he was the Messiah. He had a vastly different method of doing things. He went among men and lived the life of the Son of God; he lived the life and did the work of the Messiah; he scattered blessings on every hand. Everywhere he went he was the compassionate, righteous, wonder worker, and the people looked on and drew their own conclusions" (James A. Francis).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

It is a ghost, verse 26. "The appearance of any unusual and inexplicable phenomenon has in all ages of the world been a cause of terror. Among the popular superstitions of Eastern people is one in which the mysterious appearance at night of a person is supposed to indicate the death of that person or else the death of the person who observes it. Traces of the same belief are found in the Anglo-Saxon race, in the use of the word 'wraith' as applied to such apparitions."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing upon the Lesson. On what other occasions have our lessons told us about Jesus going apart to pray?

The Background of the Lesson. When the people saw the sign which Jesus did in the feeding of the five thousand, they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (Jn. 6.14). It was a Jewish belief that as Moses had led the Israelites into the wilderness and fed them with bread from heaven, so the Messiah would lead them into the wilderness of Bashan and feed them with manna (Jn. 6.26-37). The people were in ancient Bashan, the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and they seemed to think that this expectation was about to be realized. By drawing the attention of the crowd to the disciples departing in the boat, Jesus was able to make his escape from them.

Perhaps the disciples expected Jesus to join them at Bethsaida Julias (Mk. 6.45) on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, and then they would cross to Capernaum (Jn. 6.17), but the "contrary wind" coming down the Jordan Valley drove them out into the lake and away from Bethsaida. Perhaps, however, Bethsaida south of Capernaum was their destination. The lake at the northern end is six miles wide, but in eight hours, if they started immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, they had gone only some three and a half miles (Jn. 6.19).

Storms on the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee lies six hundred and eighty feet below the level of the ocean; the heat warms the air above the lake so that it rises, while cold winds from the mountainous plateau on the east, which stretches backward and upward to Mount Hermon, rush down the deep ravines cut by the rivers and thus cause sudden and violent storms.

A traveler describes such a storm: "I spent the night in the mountains east of the lake. The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to blow towards the lake, and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence, so that when we descended to the shore the next morning the surface of the lake was like a boiling cauldron. The wind swept down every wady from the northeast and east with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to land at any point along the coast."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST THE EVER-PRESENT HELPER

Beginning the Lesson. Peter and John and the other disciples were being trained for a work, the dangers, difficulties and disappointments of which would be so many and great, as Dr. A. E. Garvie reminds us, that only an invincible and triumphant constancy of faith could carry them through. "By faith they must move mountains and cast them into the midst of the sea; they must attempt and achieve the humanly impossible; they must never falter in their belief that God can do all things. How were they to be taught this lesson? Would words, however eloquent, be sufficient? Are not deeds more persuasive than words? When the storm was changed to calm they learned that with Jesus they were in God's hands, and that he could and would do all that was needful for their safety. When Jesus came to them on the water they learned that his presence and protection would ever be with them, and though they might be forgetful of him, he would never forget them. If we realize that the establishment and extension of God's Kingdom, and the faith in God's omniscient care, omniscient wisdom, and omnipotent might, depended on the faith of these men, the difficulty in believing even these miracles may be removed."

Our Attitude toward the Miracle. I travel into the South Seas, and I meet a man there who has never so much as heard of ice, and I say, "My Southern friend, I walked across a lake one day in February, and never even got my feet wet." And

he throws up his hands in amazement, and says, "That is contrary to reason." What he is trying to say is that it is contrary to his experience.

When the Evangelist tells me that Jesus walked across a Palestinian lake in April, I have no right to say that it is contrary to my reason—it is contrary to my experience. But my experience is rather a diminutive affair. If I am to cut down Christianity to the dimensions of my experience, I shall not have anything left of surpassing value. The fact is, Christ transcends my experience at every point. What he said runs as far beyond me as what he did. "I do always those things that are pleasing unto him." That is farther beyond me than walking on the water. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I never could say a thing like that.—Charles E. Jefferson, in an Address.

The Good and the Bad in Peter's Action. There was a singular mixture of good and bad in Peter's action. Looked at one way, it seems all right; like a bit of shot silk, in one light, it is bright, and in another it is black enough. What was good in it? Well, there was the man's out-and-out confidence in his Master; and there was, further, the unconsidered, instinctive shoot of love in his heart to the mysterious Figure standing there upon the water, so that his desire was to be beside him. It was far more "Bid me come to thee," than "Bid me come to thee on the water." The incident recalls that other incident when, after the resurrection, he discovered the Lord standing on the shore, and floundered through the water anyhow; whether on it or in it did not matter to him, as long as he could get near his Master.

What was bad in it? First, the characteristic pushing of himself to the front, and wish to be singled out from his brethren by some special token. "Bid *me* come." Why should he be bidden any more than John, who sits quietly and gazes, or the others, who are tugging at the oars? Then the impetuous rashness and signal over-estimate of his own capacity and courage were bad. Perhaps, too, there was a little dash of a boyish kind of wish to do a strange thing, and now that he sees his Master there, walking on the waters, he thinks he would like to try it, too. So the request is a rash, self-confident pushing of himself before his brethren into circumstances of wholly unnecessary peril and trial, of which he had not estimated the severity till he felt the water beginning to yield under his feet and the wind smiting him on the face. So that the incident is a rehearsal and anticipation of the precisely similar thing that he did when, on the morning of Christ's trial, he shouldered himself unnecessarily into the high priest's palace, and got himself close up against the fire there, without a moment's reflection on the possible danger he was running of having his loyalty melted by a fiercer flame, and little dreaming that he was going to fall, and all his courage was to ooze out at his finger-ends, before the sharp tongue of a maid-servant.

Let us take the warning from the venturesomeness of a generous, impulsive, enthusiastic religious nature. Make very sure that your zeal for the Lord has an element of sober permanence in it, and that it is the result, not of a mere transitory feeling, but of a steady, settled purpose. And do not push yourself voluntarily into places of peril or of difficulty, where the fighting is hard and the fire heavy, unless you have reasonable grounds for believing that you can stand the strain.

One can fancy with what hushed expectation the other apostles looked at Peter as he let himself down over the side of the ship, and his feet touched the surges and did not sink. Christ's grave, single-minded answer "Come" barely sanctions the apostle's request. It is at most a permission, but scarcely a command, and it is permission to try, in order that Peter may learn his own weakness. Why did he begin to sink? The vivid narrative tells us: "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid." That was why. It had been blowing every bit as hard before he stepped out of the ship. The waves were not running any higher than when he said, "Bid me come to thee." But he was down amongst them, and that makes a wonderful difference. For a moment he stood, and then the peril into which he had so heedlessly thrust himself began to tell on him. Presumption subsided swiftly into fright, as it usually does, and fear began to fulfil itself, as it usually does. "He became afraid," and that made him heavy and he began to sink. Not because the gale was any more violent, not because the uneven pavement was any more yielding, but because he was frightened, and his faith began to falter at the close sight of the danger.—Alexander Maclaren.

How to Gain the Resources of Christ. Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. That is to say, in obeying the word of

the Lord he found the very power of the Lord. He assumed he had received it, and by walking he found he had got it. And that is the only way to gain the resources of Christ. Faith is a bold venture on the word of the Lord. Faith discovers the treasures of Christ in acts of obedience. We find we have obtained the power of buoyancy when we step out in the direction of our Lord.

Was not that the significance of the mystic words which Lady Henry Somerset heard in her grounds at Eastnor Castle? She had had a long and troubled season of doubt and confusion. She had found no place of standing, no pathway of firm and secure going. One day, when all life seemed to her to be a treacherous swamp, she heard a mystic voice saying in her heart, "Act as though I were and thou shalt know that I am." She obeyed the word, the revelation was given. Her faith became vital, and the insecure foothold was transformed into the highway of the Lord.—J. H. Jowett.

Let Us Trust Our Ever-present Helper. In the midst of life's storms, let us absolutely trust in the Heavenly Father!

"If a wren can cling
To a spray a-swing
In the mad May wind, and sing, and sing,
As if she'd burst for joy;
Why cannot I,
Contented lie,
In his quiet arms, beneath his sky,
Unmoved by earth's annoy?"

We are as safe in a ship at sea as in our house on shore, if God be there; and he is there; and his angels can always find us, if we are on the pathway of obedient service.—F. B. Meyer.

Trust When the Winds Are Contrary. "The wind was contrary"—the fundamental fact was against them. There is no tide in the little lake, and it was before the days of steam. The wind, therefore, was the main force to be reckoned with, and it was adverse. It could not be changed nor reasoned with—they could only resist its blind, meaningless opposition with their puny strength.

What a picture of the situation in which lives innumerable find themselves! There is some opposing force which cannot be changed nor ordered off; it cannot be climbed over nor crawled under; it will not explain its meaning nor grant a respite for the accomplishment of some worthy purpose. The opposition is therefore confronting and baffling the life. For many a soul the night is dark, the sea is rough, and the wind is contrary.

It would be impossible to name all the contrary winds which men encounter. The stiff breeze of opposition to peace and progress may blow through the best of intentions, but it was ill-advised, and the wind is contrary for them both. The opposing wind may blow from the stubborn fact of chronic ill health. When the heartbeat is neither strong nor true, when the nerves shriek and bluster in an unnatural excitement, when wholesome food becomes disquieting instead of renewing, because of a disordered digestion, it seems well-nigh impossible for mind and heart to move serenely toward the haven where they would be.

The life may encounter a fundamental opposition in the dreariness and monotony of its toil. The loss of joy and pride in one's work which seems inevitable where a man is doomed to spend his days punching holes in a shoe, or feeding endless material into some huge machine, or weighing numberless cargoes which to him are mere weight and bulk, becomes a serious handicap to the man's advance. In every case it seems as if the great main fact had arrayed itself in opposition. The men toil in rowing and toil to no purpose.

But there was a silent and sympathetic witness of the struggle the men made. "He saw them toiling in rowing." He was watching from the heights where he had gone to pray, to see how they fared. He is ever watching. He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep while his friends are storm-tossed.

How much it means that there is some one who knows and cares! How much it means to a growing boy fighting his temptations and battling with his reluctance to face some hard duty if he overhears his father say, "The boy is putting up a hard fight—I am proud of him"! How much it means that the divine Christ sees us toiling in rowing and at the very hour when we tremble on the verge of defeat, stands ready to come with his almighty aid! The fundamental fact in the situation

is not against us, it is never against us, when we count him in with the factors which determine the issue.—Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Master's Way.

"That Hand never Lost a Soul." A gentleman traveling in the Alps came to a place where the path seemed to end at a jutting rock on one side, and an awful precipice on the other. The guide, holding on to the rock, put his other hand out over the precipice for the traveler to step upon, and thus pass the jutting rock. He hesitated, when the guide, holding out his hand, said, "That hand never lost a man." Then the traveler stepped upon the hand with faith, and passed the danger. Christ as our guide can say to us all, "That hand never lost a soul; all who trust in me shall be guided safely to heaven."—P. E. Holp.

The Wind Does not Always Cease. It is not always true that the presence of Christ is the end of dangers and difficulties, but the consciousness of his presence does hush the storm. The worst of troubles have gone when we know that he shares it; and though the long swell after the gale may last, it no longer threatens. Nor is it always true that his coming and our consciousness that he has come brings a speedy close to toils. We have to labor on, but in how different a mood these men would bend their oars after they had Jesus on board! With him beside us toil is sweet, burdens are lighter, and the road is shortened. Even with him on board, life is a stormy voyage; but without him, it ends in shipwreck.—Alexander Maclaren.

For Discussion. Which man accomplishes more, the coolly calculating or the rashly venturing? "The true apostolic succession is in the long line of men who feared no waters, who held back from no peril, who were willing to stake their lives for the faith of Jesus. All of you who have caught the vision of Christ, and have discovered something of his way and will for you, will agree with me that probably the greatest obstacle in the way today is the practical, careful, nicely calculating man, the man with the measuring rod in his hand, the man whose only God is possibility. We know him in our national and international councils. We know him in our churches. We know him in our hearts.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Jesus ask the disciples the first question? 2. The second? 3. What did he mean by the word "church"? 4. What is the rock on which Christ's church rests? 5. What is meant by "the keys of the Kingdom" and by the "binding" and "loosing"? 6. What did Jesus call himself? 7. What does the new life he inspires prove him to be? 8. Why is faith in Jesus the Christ so vital? 9. What does Jesus mean to you? 10. Is your belief in him merely a conventional one, or does it influence the way in which you live?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY PETER FAILED

Beginning the Lesson. There are web-footed birds, smaller than pigeons, which are met far out in the North Atlantic Ocean. We sometimes call them Mother Carey's Chickens, but they are usually spoken of as Stormy Petrels. Can you guess why they are called Stormy? Yes, because they are strong and brave and not afraid of the hardest storms. But why are they called Petrels? The Italians gave the birds this name because they seemed to run along the surface of the sea. They knew our lesson story about Peter. What is it?

Another instance of a storm on the Sea of Galilee is recorded in the Gospels. Where was Jesus? Then the disciples cried to their sleeping Master for help. But in this instance they must have thought it was useless to call to him. They did not think that Jesus off on the distant shore could either hear or help. And Jesus did not expect them to call him, he did not wait for them to call. He saw their peril and went to them.

Do you wonder that Peter and John failed at first to recognize their Helper? How could they imagine that Jesus would be walking on the sea! They had left him on the eastern shore, and there was no means, so far as they knew, by which he could come to them. It is not surprising under the circumstances that they thought they saw a Spirit.

You must not forget that if the disciples had had their way they would not have been out on the sea at all nor in any trouble. They had wanted to stay on the shore with Jesus, and it was only in obedience to his desire that they had left him. They were troubled in the path of duty. And Jesus did not forget them.

When they needed him, he came to their rescue. If we get into difficulties through carrying out his commands, we may be sure that we shall not be deserted.

Peter's Presumption. See The Good and Bad in Peter's Action, preceding topic.

Why Peter Failed. A teacher of the art of swimming must combine firmness with mercy and judgment. If you have not firmness, you will let your pupils have a float or a life preserver, or you will always hold up his chin for him and stay close by him. If you lack mercy you will toss him in and refuse him help, and the shock of fear he gets will prevent him from ever again trying to learn to swim. And if you lack judgment you may do either of these things, and may fail to see the difference between a naturally bold or over-daring and a naturally timid or over-cautious pupil, and so may treat every one alike, may treat no pupil wisely. To learn to swim well requires several qualities. One must have courage and caution and faith. The coward will not venture enough; he stays in shallow water. The heedless ventures too much and risks his life. The faithless does not obey advice or trust promises.

What have you ever taught any one? Chess? Tennis? Bowling? Marbles? You had to use the same qualities, then—firmness in making your pupil try to do the thing himself, mercy in preventing his failure, judgment in knowing how much help to give and when to give it. And for the latter purpose you had to know not only how difficult was the task but what sort of pupil you had. Do you remember in your own experience as a pupil, a teacher who was too severe? One who was too helpful? One who did not inspire confidence?

As a pupil, what was Peter's chief virtue? What was his chief fault? Was Jesus wise to let him try to walk on the water? What do you think was Peter's first failure here? Was Jesus wise in letting him sink? Was he wise in saving him? Was the result of this lesson that Peter learned to walk on the water so that he could henceforth astonish people by doing this? What did he learn by this experience? Was that what Jesus meant to teach him? Peter seems to have thought that he was learning one thing, but Jesus was teaching him another thing. That often happens to us. In all the stories of the miracles of Jesus, what kind of deeds did he do? If you had a wonderful power, for what purpose would you use it—to do good, or to show off?

When you set out to do a difficult thing, do you become conceited as soon as you find that you can do it? Do you suppose it was that sort of overconfidence which caused Peter to sink? What else might it have been? Every now and then we hear of a baseball player or a great actor who "loses his nerve," or of one who "gets careless." In whom has one who loses nerve lost faith? In whom does he who gets careless have too much faith?

When you are doing things to show off, you have a good excuse for losing faith, for your faith is only in yourself, and all sorts of things may be the matter with you. But when you are doing things to serve other people the situation is different. What makes the difference? What right have you to expect help? When have you the right to expect it?

Peter's Trust in Jesus Should Have Been like the Child's Trust in her Father. The Christian Herald tells this incident:—

One night, when all were quietly sleeping, there arose a sudden squall of wind which came sweeping over the waters until it struck the vessel and threw her on on side, tumbling and crashing everything that was movable and awakening the passengers to a consciousness of their imminent peril. They sprang from their berths and began to dress that they might be ready for the worst. The captain had an eight-year-old daughter on board who, of course, awoke with the rest.

"What's the matter?" the frightened child asked. They told her that a squall had struck the ship. "Is father on deck?" she asked. "Yes, he is," she was told. She dropped herself on her pillow again without a fear, and in a few minutes was sleeping peacefully in spite of wind and waves.

It Is I, Be not Afraid. Those who have been in a cyclone are not likely to forget the experience. It is a kind of revolving hurricane which sweeps the tropical seas in a circle, and woe betide the ship that is caught in it! I remember being thus caught off the island of Formosa. The wind split our sails into shreds. Birds fell dead upon the decks. Huge seas swept over our vessel smashing the bulwarks like matchwood. But as the providence of God would have it, we somehow got

into the very center of the storm-swept circle. There in the very heart of the cyclone we lay becalmed and as quiet as in a land-locked bay. So in the heart of every storm that comes to us on life's troubled sea we should find Christ. His cheery voice rings through the tempest, saying: "It is I, be not afraid."

A manufacturer took his little daughter to his factory for the first time. The child, terrified by the deafening roar of the machinery all around her, clung to her father, sobbing. "What are you afraid of? Don't you know I am master here?" he said. "Look." And he lifted his finger. In a moment every wheel was still, every sound hushed. When the disciples of Jesus saw his mastery over the seas, they recognized his divinity.—Sunday School Chronicle.

Why Are We Fearful?

What time I am afraid,
I will put my trust in thee,

the Psalmist sings. This was the lesson Jesus would have Peter learn in that incident on the Sea of Galilee. It was one of the lessons he had taught him in the Sermon on the Mount. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink. Behold the birds of the heaven, your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? . . . If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? . . . Be not therefore anxious." There is fear lest one may not have food and raiment, the material things of this world; there is fear lest troubles, dangers and disasters may come; there are fears multitudinous; but there is one source of relief from them all—a perfect trust in the heavenly Father.

Over the mantel in Gladstone's bedroom there hung this text: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." There lay the secret of his great peace of mind. It is said that he never went forth to his day's duties without first asking God's help. A perfect faith will lift us above fear.

Whom to Trust. To trust, according to the dictionary, means to repose confidence, to believe, to expect, to rely on. All excellent things to do at the right time: but in whom do we trust in days of anxiety and doubt?

In ourselves very often, and in our own judgment and experience. It is the easiest thing in the world, at times, to believe in yourself, and to make up your mind that you are right and others wrong.

We are also over-inclined to trust in friends. I don't mean that this is wrong, but we can carry it too far. We take the advice of others when we ourselves know what our decision should be: or if we do not know, a few minutes in prayer would doubtless make the matter quite clear.

Look this great question straight in the face, and nine times out of ten we have to admit that we do not trust in God. How many times, when young folks have come to me for advice, I have asked them this question, "Have you prayed about it?" And they have replied, "No, I never thought of doing that!"

It is not hard to trust an earthly father, when you see his kind face every day and hear his voice, and it will be a much easier thing for us all to trust our Heavenly Father, if we are seeking his face often in prayer, and looking in his Book for words of guidance. There are times when trusting needs faith, and then it is well to remember that God never forgets us, but in his own time will provide for our needs and open our way.—The Christian.

Sentence Sermons. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.—Twenty-third Psalm.

Try and trust will remove mountains, so an old proverb says: try without trusting and you merely make a small hole in the hill; trust without trying and the hole fills up again; try and trust at the same time and see what happens.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Cæsarea Philippi? 2. What is meant by confessing Christ? 3. Can you confess him by your actions as well as by your words? 4. What does John say in 1 Jn. 4.15 about confessing Christ? 5. Who does Paul say in Phil. 2.11 should confess Christ? 6. What does Jesus say in Lk. 6.46 you should do if you call him Lord? 7. What is Jesus to you? 8. Have you openly confessed what you believe about Jesus?

PETER'S GREAT CONFESSION

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16.16

LESSON Matthew 16.13-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

MATTHEW 16.13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? 14 And they said, Some *say* John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

21 From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. 22 And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. OPINIONS ABOUT JESUS, verses 13, 14. With his disciples Jesus had journeyed as far as the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi when he suddenly asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" The phrase, "the Son of man," was not associated in the popular mind with the idea of the Messiah, for had it been, Jesus would not have used it as he did early in his ministry. He used it here, seemingly, with no implication as to his identity. Mark and Luke give his question thus: "Who do men say that I am?"

The disciples answered that some thought he was John the Baptist (as Herod said, Mt. 14.2); some, that he was Elijah; and others, Jeremiah or some other of the prophets. "There was no man then living with whom he could be compared. We do the same thing. When we want to stir men's hearts, we appeal to the dead; when we search for the great, we descend into the grave, we talk of Shakespeare and Cæsar, of Charlemagne and Alfred the Great, of Lincoln and Webster, we dare not use the name of a man living. That is what the Jews did. This tells very clearly that to them he was a man of tremendous power" (C. E. Jefferson). "Did you ever think of the vast difference there is between the characters of Elijah and Jeremiah?" questions G. H. Morrison. "The one is ardent, enthusiastic, fierce sometimes. The other is the prophet of the tender heart. And the remarkable thing is that the common people should have taken these types, which are so wide apart, and should have found in both the character of Christ. In other words, the impression which Jesus made was that of a complex, inclusive personality. You could not exhaust him by a single prophet. It took the range of the greatest to portray his character."

II. PETER ANSWERS A VITAL QUESTION, verses 15, 16. "But who say ye that I am?" Jesus further questioned. And Peter, speaking not for himself alone but as spokesman for the group, answered with conviction, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "The living God" is an Old Testament expression: compare Hosea 1.10. *Christ* is the translation of a Greek word, and *Messiah* is the translation of a Hebrew word, both of which mean *the Anointed.* Hebrew kings were anointed with oil when given their office, and the Spiritual King was thought of as the Anointed, the Chosen One of God, until the "The Anointed," The Christ, became the name by which he was designated.

"The term Christ has taken on a still deeper meaning as the centuries have passed. It means now that Divine Person who in his glorious humanity reveals the nature and the will of God the Father, shows us what we may also become by the help of God, and proves himself a Savior from sin to all who trust themselves to him in love and obedience" (Azora S. Davis).

"It was a divine revelation to Peter—a flash of intuition, which drew into itself the best thoughts, feelings and expressions of the past two years. The lowly origin of the Carpenter, the familiarity of daily intercourse, the shocks of disapproval, the delay of hopes making the heart sick, the haughty repudiation of Jesus by the authorized teachers of Israel, and the ebbing tide of his popularity in Galilee, might have almost justified a fisherman's inability to answer this momentous question. But, in spite of all doubts and dreadful uncertainties, there was that in Simon's soul which leapt up in answer to the Master's word—wholeheartedness and a sudden sense of the greatness of the Reality in Jesus; impelled by this spirit, he trampled down all doubts, and burst out in enthusiastic confession of faith and loyalty" (Wm. A. Grist).

"Faith begins as experiment, and ends as experience" (J. H. Jowett).

Jesus has been called "the Son of God," i.e., the Christ, by John the Baptist (Jn. 1.34), by Andrew when first he met Jesus (Jn. 1.41), by Nathanael (Jn. 1.49), by the disciples after Jesus with Peter had joined him in the boat (our last lesson), and on other occasions by those whom he had cured. Why, then, was this acknowledgment of Peter's regarded as so epoch-making? Because the more than two years of companionship with Jesus had confirmed the belief which the disciples had first received from John the Baptist; they had attained to a full realization of the content of the term, and it was their one deep conviction that their Master was in truth the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Some things we think we believe merely because we say them. Have we the conviction of Peter when we say in our Creed, "I believe in the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord"? Do we fully realize the meaning of the sacred name of Christ?

III. PETER RECEIVES A GREAT COMMENDATION, verses 17-19. "Simon, son of John," Jesus exclaimed, greatly moved, "human lips (flesh and blood, mortal man) have not revealed this to you: the knowledge has come through my Father in heaven." "Jesus meant that humanity itself can never discover God or find him out. The recognition of God must always be God's own disclosure of himself in the heart of man."

"Peter's answer thrilled our Master to the depths. He was understood. How instantly did it alleviate and mitigate all the bitter pain he had to bear! And whenever in this difficult life of ours God sends us somebody who understands, is it not always a comfort to us? To have somebody whom we can trust—who we are sure will never misinterpret—who never judges us except in love—who appreciates and understands—what earthly comfort in all the range of comfort can for one moment be compared with that?" (George H. Morrison).

"Thou hast said, I am the Christ; I now say to thee, Thou art Peter." Recall how Jesus foretold (Jn. 1.42) that shifting Simon would attain a rocklike character. "Thou art Peter (*Petros,* Rock), and upon this rock (*Petra,* rock), I will build my church": there is a play upon words here. Whether "this rock" means Peter as he then was or Peter as he afterwards became, or Peter's confession, or the fact of the Lord's Messiahship, has been much debated and disputed. The words are inscribed in Latin around the interior of the dome of St. Peter's, Rome. The claims of the Papacy rest not only upon this verse but also upon the contention that Peter became the first Bishop of Rome and that his authority was transmitted to succeeding popes. "The Roman Catholic Launoy reckons that seventeen Fathers regard Peter as the rock; forty-four regard Peter's confession as the rock; sixteen regard Christ himself as the rock; while eight are of the opinion that the Church is built on all the apostles." In the metaphor of 1 Pet. 2.4-8, Jesus is the foundation of his Church; in that of Eph. 2.20, he is the keystone, while Peter primarily here, but also his fellow disciples (ye also, as living stones, 1 Pet. 2.5) and all who have his faith and zeal, are foundation stones of the Kingdom of heaven.

"'I will build my Church.' Jesus was building a church. I do not mean a stone structure with a spire on it—one cannot build a church out of stone, or boards, or brick. With that material one can only build the building where some church may meet. The church itself is built out of men and women, young men and maidens, boys and girls, who have seen in Christ

what Peter saw in him, who have declared their loyalty to him as Peter declared his loyalty, who are undertaking to live in that same high mood. Out of that sort of material—on that foundation, he will build his church. The Master recognized the necessity for organized effort. One cannot sing an oratorio all by himself. I care not how splendid his voice may be. He must merge his voice in a chorus of voices. The same sound principle holds when we come to sing the Lord's song and to do the Lord's work. It can only be done when men and women come together, are agreed, and begin to act in concert as members of the body of Christ" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

"And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Since there is no English word to correspond to the Hebrew *sheol,* the invisible world, the abode of the dead, the Revisers have used the Latin word Hades. Our word *hell,* which originally meant *sheol,* has acquired the meaning of the abode of the wicked. The church is indestructible. "As the church is often represented as a city, so now its great adversary Death is poetically represented as a fortified city with walls and gates" (Dummelow).

"That which is called 'my church'—the church of living souls bound to him by an immortal love—will never know change nor decay. There will always be upon this earth an ever-increasing number of souls, men and women to whom he is more than all else in the world, who serve him and would rather die than deny him" (Greenbough).

"I will give unto thee the keys of heaven," continued Jesus; "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The key was the symbol of power, or authority. A scribe was given a key on beginning his duties, to indicate that to him was entrusted the power of opening, or interpreting, the law. As a scribe or rabbi rendered decisions in accordance with Jewish law, so Peter would render decisions in accordance with the law of Christ, in accordance with his teaching. "To bind" was a Jewish legal phrase for "to declare forbidden, to prohibit"; and "to loose" was a phrase for "to declare permissible, to permit"; whatever Peter should forbid or allow, would be ratified by God. See Light from Oriental Life. This promise was afterwards made to all the disciples (Mt. 18.18; Jn. 20.23). There is no question of absolving from sin. "He received the power here of laying down the law of Christian conduct. Whosoever, like Peter, grasps firmly the cardinal truths of Christ's nature, and all which flows therefrom, will have his insight so cleared that his judgment on what is permitted or forbidden to a Christian will correspond with the decisions of Heaven" (Alexander Maclaren).

IV. A CAUTION, verse 20. Jesus charged his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. Their own erroneous views of what the Christ would do could only make trouble if told to the multitudes, and would hasten the death of Jesus at the hands of the Pharisees and Sadducees. "How long dost thou hold us in suspense?" the latter questioned at the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem. "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." But he only told them, "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."

V. PETER RECEIVES A SCATHING REBUKE, verses 21-23. Before this Jesus had referred to his approaching death (Mt. 9.15; Jn. 2.18-22; 3.14), but from now on he spoke plainly about it, declaring that he must go to Jerusalem, there to be ill-treated by elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death. "He *must* die because he *would save.* The great 'must' which ruled his life was a cable of two strands—obedience to the Father, and love to men. These haled him to the cross, and fastened him there. This verse covers an indefinite time, during which Jesus gradually spoke about his coming sufferings. Ordinarily we exaggerate the suddenness and therefore the depth of Peter's fall, by supposing it took place immediately after his confession" (Alexander Maclaren).

"And the third day be raised up." "The Evangelists, indeed, write it down in plain language, as fully taught by their later experience, that he was to be rejected by the rulers of Israel, slain, and to rise again the third day. And there can be as little doubt that Christ's language (as afterwards they looked back upon it) must have clearly implied all this, as that at the time they did not fully understand it. Otherwise they could not afterwards have been in such doubt about his death and resurrection. He was so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking what he said about 'the leaven' in a literal, which he had meant in a figurative, sense, that it was but natural they should

have regarded in the same light, announcements which, in their strict literality, would seem to them well-nigh incredible. They could well understand his rejection by the scribes as a sort of figurative death, or violent suppression of his claim and doctrines, and then, after briefest periods, their resurrection as it were, but not those terrible details in their full literations" (Alfred Edersheim).

Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid! (be it far from thee) Lord: this shall never be unto thee," he said. Recall the time when the friends of Martin Luther entreated him to stay at home and look out for his own safety instead of going to the Diet at Worms. Peter was playing the tempter's part; the sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," which sprang from the lips of his Lord, shows the intensity of the latter's emotion.

"That was a wonderful sermon!" said a lady to a distinguished English preacher.

"Madam," he replied, "so the devil told me as I descended the pulpit stairs."

"Thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Thou dost not think God's thoughts. "Thou art not, as before, a noble block, lying in the right position as a massive foundation-stone. On the contrary, thou art like a stone quite out of its proper place,—lying right across the road in which I must go—lying as a stone of stumbling" (Morrison).

"None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends, who care more for our comfort than for our character" (A. B. Bruce).

VI THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP, verse 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Not only must Jesus endure the cross, but Peter (and all true followers) must be ready to deny himself, yield his will to his Master's, and take up his cross and follow him.

"When one sees how little Christian men and women deny themselves for the service of Christ, how feebly the love of Christ controls their life, one wonders, not so much why they are not consecrated Christians, as why they are Christian at all!" (G. H. C. Maggregor).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The keys of the kingdom, verse 19. The key has always been a symbol of power and authority. To "confer a key" meant the bestowing of a position of trust. When a change of government came to a city the keys of its gates were given up to the new rulers in token of their authority. Eastern keys are such long, clumsy affairs that they are often carried slung over the shoulder.

Carrying Keys in the East

Whatsoever thou shalt bind . . . whatsoever thou shalt loose, verse 19. Every rabbi or scribe received at his ordination, which was by the laying on of hands, the power to bind and to loose, i.e., to decide with authority what was lawful and unlawful to be done, or orthodox and unorthodox to be believed. *To bind* was to declare unlawful, *to loose* was to declare lawful. We read, for example, that "Rabbi Meir loosed (i.e., permitted) the mixing of wine and oil, and the anointing of the sick man on the Sabbath"; that Rabbi Jochanan said, "They necessarily loose (i.e. permit) saluting on the Sabbath," and "Concerning gathering wood on a feast day, the school of Shammai binds (i.e., forbids) it—the school of Hillel looses (i.e., permits) it." The power, therefore, which Christ here promised to Peter and the other apostles was the power to decide with authority questions of faith and morals in the Christian church—the power to fix the moral standard and to determine the Christian creed.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did Peter gain his knowledge about Jesus? In our previous lessons, what instances of the greater than human power of Jesus has Peter seen? How did he learn a lesson in trust? After the

incident of our last lesson, what did the disciples say they believed Jesus to be? When did Jesus tell Simon that his name should be Peter? What is the meaning of that name?

The Time and Place. The ministry of Jesus was drawing to a close. The crucifixion was only a few months off. He and his disciples were going north and had reached the region of Cæsarea Philippi. He had long been teaching them: had their companionship with him brought to them the wonderful knowledge of who he is? He would test them.

Cæsarea Philippi was at the foot of the Lebanon Range, at the base of Mount Hermon. It was called Cæsarea of Philippi to distinguish it from another Cæsarea on the sea coast, and also because Philip the Tetrarch, in whose province it was, had done much to render the city beautiful. It is now called Banias, from its other name of Paneas, in honor of the god Pan.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

No one can teach in the moral and spiritual realm with the greatest effectiveness that which he does not himself believe with depth of conviction. You cannot kindle another by rote. That which does not greatly move you will scarcely greatly move another through you. This simply means that our effective teaching is necessarily confined to what is vitally real to us—to our real inner creed. For the sake of both the breadth and the effectiveness of one's teaching, one must seek to deepen and to extend his convictions; for there is no cheap way to become a good teacher of spiritual things.

You count yourselves, first and foremost, disciples of Jesus Christ, and the supreme aim of your teaching is to bring others into the same discipleship. This must mean, that either your living or your teaching is undertaken with full thoughtfulness, that you call yourselves Christians and have become teachers of the Christian faith because you believe that he from whom you take your name is the most significant Person of history. You believe that Christ's life and teaching have more light than any other fact of history to throw upon God, upon man, upon all the varied relations of God and Man, and so upon the practical problem of daily living in its deepest aspects. That is, you see God, men, and all of life through Christ.—Henry Churchill King, in Letters to Sunday-school Teachers.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. We never know just what our faith is until we state it in words. This is why Jesus at Cæsarea Philippi led his disciples on to their great confession. They had gradually learned to know who their great Teacher was, but they had not fully realized that they knew this until they gave voice to their belief through Peter, their spokesman. Before this, they might have been convinced that they were following a false gleam: after this, nothing could have turned them from their conviction that they were following the Light of the World. "Their faith had emerged from thought into word; had become secular, visible; tangible; they had seen it, localized it, weighed and measured it, stamped and labeled it. 'Thou art the Christ.' They deliberately said this. All the belief that was in solution in their minds crystallized in these few words. Each facet and angle was clearly defined. There was little danger of their ever disowning this faith; and in fact, though persecution and martyrdom awaited most of them, they never did disown it."

How did Peter's avowal affect Jesus? What did Jesus say? How do you interpret his words, "Upon this rock I will build my church"?

Peter the Rock on which Christ's Church is Built. Bishop McConnell believes that Jesus meant just what he said. He looks at the imperfect humanity of Peter and believes that it was upon that sort of foundation Jesus said he would build his church. He finds the only extraordinariness about Peter to consist in his being extraordinarily the ordinary man, a type of that common human strength and human frailty, of which any founder of a church must take account.

"Peter was imperfect, to be sure, but the Kingdom of God does not rest on hard-and-fast infallibilities in men," are Dr. McConnell's words. "If the kingdom had infallibilities in men as its foundation it might indeed stand, but nobody would pay much attention to it. It would have to lie off the main highway of the world's life. The only kingdom that will help us is one founded on men like ourselves. Peter does not say anything the ordinary man might not have said—if he had dared. When Peter starts on a risky course it is the course we would have taken if we had dared. When Peter blunders he blunders much as we would blunder, and his fall keeps us out of a pit. Peter is in himself a sort of cross-section of ordinary humanity. On that type of life the kingdom abides. We need prophets, seers and saints, but a kingdom of humanity cannot rest on such alone as a foundation. There are not enough of them. There are enough Peters. In the Peters there is enough soundness, not to make a perfect kingdom, but to make one that will stand. The thought of Jesus concerning the possibilities of the Peter-type as foundation stone is prophetic of the permanence of the church and, it may be said, of Christian society as well."

Some Say John the Baptist; Some, Elijah; and Others, Jeremiah. Dr. J. H. Jowett preached a forceful sermon upon "The Severity of Jesus." In his apt way he commented upon the impression which Jesus made upon the ordinary imagination of his day: a John the Baptist with his defiance of unworthy convention, his proneness to call a spade a spade, and his fearful talk of the axe, and the fan, and the flame; an Elijah, whose spirit blazed against the undecided and the "weak-kneed" who halt between two opinions, and who moved toward his goal with the impetuous directness of flame; a Jeremiah who exposed immoralities and self-deceptions. "Well, is this Jesus ever found in the portrait gallery of the church?" he questioned. And he referred to our thought of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, as the tender Physician, as the Light of the World, as the Friend of little children; to our thought of him in Gethsemane and on the cross. "But have we Jesus as he appeared when he looked like John the Baptist, when he spoke and moved like Jeremiah, when his face was filled with the anger and menace of the prophet Elijah? Have we erased the severities of Jesus, and have we reduced him to a sweet and effeminate friend who can never make people afraid?" And then Dr. Jowett named over the occasions when Jesus showed that he could be terribly severe. We know them all well, but when assembled, they present Jesus as strikingly like Elijah and John and Jeremiah in tone and mien.

"I do not call for the rejection of a single tender element which has gathered in our conception of the Lord since the days of our childhood," the great preacher cried. "It is not rejection that we need, but addition—not rejection, but enlargement. Keep your picture of the Good Shepherd, but add to it that of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Keep your picture of Christ with the whip of small cords. I do not ask you to surrender the fourteenth chapter of John: I ask you to add to it the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Keep your fifteenth chapter of Luke, with its heartening example of the home-welcome of a prodigal son, but by its side place the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, with its livid lineaments of a most certain judgment."

It is because of the absence of these sterner elements in our conception of Jesus that there is so conspicuous a lack of awe in our religious life, and the ability to flame with indignation at another's wrongs, Dr. Jowett believed, and he counseled us to spend some time in the sterner company of Jesus.

There Is No One Else. "I was talking with a leading man, a thinker of India," said E. Stanley Jones in a lecture, "and asked him what he thought of Jesus Christ. 'Well,' said he, 'there seems to be no one else seriously bidding for the heart of the world except Jesus Christ. There is no one else on the field.'"

What Right Thinking about Christ Is. You cannot make it a matter of indifference whether you think rightly of Christ or not; the question is very short, very simple, but the answer to it involves life or death.

Let us then inquire what it is to think rightly of Christ. First with respect to his Person, we must think of him as together with the Father and the Holy Spirit making up the Trinity.

We must think of him as perfect Man, of like nature with ourselves in everything, sin only excepted.

We must think of him as the great Redeemer and Savior, who by the voluntary sacrifice and death of himself made atonement for the sins of the whole world.

We must think of him as the great Example, who has left men a pattern that they should walk in his steps, who has given them, in his own Person and behavior, a model of conduct in nearly every department of life.

But this is not all. There are two ways of thinking about Christ, and both are necessary, but one is very often found to exist without the other. It is one thing to think of him with the head, and another to think of him with the heart; it is one thing to think about his offices as a matter of opinion, it is another to rejoice in them as infinitely important to your own soul; it is one thing to know these things correctly, it is another to live as if you felt them; it is one thing to acknowledge that Christ is a mighty gift to ruined man, it is quite another to apply this healing medicine to your own case.—Dr. J. C. Ryle, in The Christian Race.

What a Non-Christian Chinese Professor Thinks about Christ. There is no keener mind in all of China than that of Dr. Chen Tu Hsiu of Peking University. Recently he wrote an article mercilessly attacking the Christian religion. The missionaries were grilled. He sneered at the "rice Christians" among our members. With sharp invective he held up to scorn the persecutions of Protestants by Catholics in the old days. No man like myself, trying to read the article in the light of historical knowledge, could fail to be impressed by the strength of his argument.

But the striking fact is that when he came to consider the character of Christ himself he had nothing but good to say. He lifted him up, away up. Why, let me tell you the conclusion of the whole article, "The spirit of Jesus must get into the blood of every one of the four hundred million people of China before we can hope to come out of dark into light, out of death into life, out of the pit in which we now are." Isn't that great? If a man who is not a Christian, but who instead is violently opposed to Christianity, can see this spiritual supremacy of Christ, do you wonder that I feel nothing but confidence about the effect of the renaissance upon China?—C. Y. Cheng.

An Artist's Interpretation of the Attitude of Many toward Jesus. There is a picture entitled "He was despised and rejected," by Sigismund Goetze. The artist had attended a service at St. Paul's Cathedral, and heard a sermon that made a deep impression upon him; it found his higher being with something like the touch of an immortal influence. He thought within himself: "What a real difference a word like this must make in the thoughts and lives of those who have been privileged to listen to it. Never again, surely, can they be as though they had not heard it." It was a message, so he felt, to shake men, to arouse them. But not a word did he hear, not a look did he see on the face of a departing worshiper which so much as betrayed a transient emotion. If they had listened to the discourse, they had evidently forgotten what they had been at no pains to remember. Hence he resolved to repeat the sermon through the translation of his art. They should, if he could accomplish it, receive through the eyes what they would not hear with the ears.

In the picture the central figure of the Crucified One is close by an ancient altar, yet immediately outside a modern building called a Christian church. There he stands, unregarded and silent, while there stream past him the clearly-defined types of a twentieth century multitude—each, with one doubtful exception, as indifferent about who, and whence, and why he is, as if he were one of the stone pillars that support the vestibule of the temple dedicated to his worship. Poverty sits at his very feet and is not even curious; fashion and vice, toil and sport, culture and ignorance, want and opulence pass by, and do not so much as despise and reject him—for that at least would argue some form of interest.—Ambrose Shepherd, in Men in the Making.

How to Learn to Think Aright about Jesus. Read books about Christ. Can you not spend thirty minutes of your life each day in getting to know the Perfect Man? Take up the biographies by those simple, earnest men, the authors of the Gospels. Begin with Matthew. You read a few chapters, and you fall in love with the Man. Slowly the knowledge changes character, and then you say, "My Lord and my God!"—Henry Drummond.

For Discussion. 1. It is possible for men to have good thoughts of Jesus and yet not right ones; a high opinion of him, and yet not high enough.—Matthew Henry.

2. The supremacy of Jesus. See Chapter I of The Essence of Religion, by Borden P. Bowne.

3. Public opinion. See Chapter III of Christian Citizenship, by Francis J. McConnell.

4. The Roman Catholic claim for the pope as the successor of Peter.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What other transfigured faces are mentioned in the Bible? What was each doing when their faces were transfigured? 2. What do you think of Peter's observation in verse 5? 3. What was the source of Christ's glory? 4. What did the Transfiguration do for the disciples? 5. For Jesus? 6. What can transform faces now?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CONFESSING CHRIST OPENLY

Beginning the Lesson. Visitors at an institution for deaf mutes were questioning the pupils, at their teacher's suggestion. The visitors wrote on the board: What can you tell us about Washington? Lincoln? Napoleon? And one after another of the pupils replied. Then one of the men asked, "What can you tell us of Jesus Christ?" A beautiful reply was given by a young girl: "He is my very own Savior."

One day Jesus suddenly asked his disciples who men thought him to be. What did they answer? And then he asked them who they thought him. Who answered his question? What did Peter say? How had Peter gained this knowledge of Jesus? Dr. Burrell suggests that Peter might have answered our question in the following way:—

"I was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. One day Jesus came to the lake-shore and preached; and when he called for followers, I, drawn by some attraction that I cannot explain, rose up and followed him. I was with him three years through evil and good report; and never saw I another like him. I was slow to believe that One who ate and drank, and laughed and wept with us, could be more than a man; but his assumption of Godhood left me no alternative but to regard him as either an impostor or what he claimed to be. The former was unthinkable; the latter seemed preposterous. My mind hung in the balance until, one day toward the end, as he was coming down the slope of Mount Hermon through Cæsarea Philippi with his disciples, healing the sick and preaching by the way and strangely hinting at his approaching death, he suddenly asked of us, 'Who do men say that I am?' We answered, 'Some say thou art Elijah, others Jeremiah, others John the Baptist risen from the dead!' 'But who say ye that I am?' For me the hour of decision had come. The progressive argument of the years that I had lived and labored with him smote me like a sunburst and I cried from the uttermost depths of my soul, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!'"

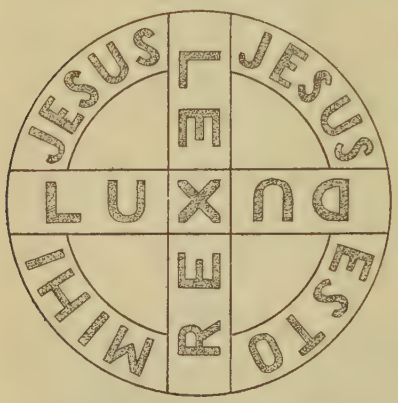
The Slope of Mount Hermon

The Duty of Confessing Christ Openly. What is our topic today? What does it mean to "confess Christ"? Why is it a duty to confess him? Jesus gained his first little group of followers, you remember, by one of them telling another that he had found the Christ. And that is the way in which the Kingdom still grows. It is the way, too, in which your realization of your own personal relation to Jesus will grow, by putting it into words, by bearing witness to the fact that Jesus is your Savior and Friend. Possibly it has not been easy for you to confess him openly. If so, the experience of Dr. Josiah Strong, as he has told it in My Religion in Everyday Life, will help you.

"I had been trying for some time to be a follower of Christ and live a Christian life without letting a soul know it—at home, in school, or anywhere else," he says. "The conviction was forced upon me that I must openly acknowledge my purpose; but that was precisely the hardest thing in the world for me to do. If known in the home, my many shortcomings and especially my fits of temper would appear all the more glaring in the light of my newly expressed purpose. If known at school, I should doubtless attract abundant ridicule, for I should be singular. There was not a boy in the village who professed to be a Christian.

"The specific question which came to me was: 'Are you willing to go to the Young People's Meeting next Tuesday evening, stand on your feet, and say that you desire and intend to live a Christian life? If others were taking the step, or if the pastor would only give an invitation, it would be so much easier. But there was no special religious interest in the church or in the community; the help of an invitation would not be given; every one would be startled; and in that little village world it would be proclaimed on the housetop the next day.

"Such a prospect to a diffident boy of thirteen was appalling, but my mind was made up, and I said, 'I'll do it.' Instantly the distress I had long felt vanished, and a strange, unspeakable peace possessed me."



What Christ Can Be to Us. The interesting device here reproduced was chiseled on a Christian tomb in the Catacomb of Domitella which was opened in Rome in 1900. Read in all directions, we have: *Jesus esto mihi* (Jesus, be thou to me) *Rex* (King), *Lux* (Light), *Lex* (Law), *Dux* (Leader).

A Personal Question. Looking steadily at my great Master today, I would ask myself what kind of Christ is he to me. I would ask myself what kind of witness I am to him when he calls for my testimony to him, and asks whether that testimony is borne by my lips alone, or by my life as well. "What dost thou say I am to thee? And how art thou saying it? Dost thou say it openly, with the joyous tone of one who glories in confessing it? Does thy whole life say, and say unmistakably, 'This Christ is my Redeemer and my King'?"—G. H. Knight.

One Way in Which to Confess Christ. We can confess Christ by the way we respect his name. If we refrain from ever using it irreverently, if when we speak it we speak it as the name of a Friend honored and revered and loved, let us be sure that others will draw the right inference and will know what Christ is to us and what we would have him be to others also.

On the other hand we can deny Christ by what we allow to be said about him. If we feel no concern to hear him dishonored and his name reviled or used in cheap and irreverent ways, or if feeling such concern we nevertheless find no way to express what we feel, we shall have denied Christ as effectively as if we had said openly, "Well, I don't respect him either."

Sentence Sermons. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Paul.

Here is the Truth in a little creed,
Enough for all the roads we go;
In Love is all the law we need,
In Christ the only God we know.—Edwin Markham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does *transfigured* mean? 2. What was Jesus doing when he was transfigured? (Lk. 9.29.) 3. What did Peter's impulsive remark mean? 4. Why was it foolish? 5. What gave Jesus that glorified look? 6. What did Peter learn at the Transfiguration? 7. How can you make your face pleasing in the years to come?

LESSON IV—APRIL 24

PETER AT THE TRANSFIGURATION

GOLDEN TEXT: There came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him. Mark 9.7

LESSON Mark 9.2-10; 2 Peter 1.16-18 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Isaiah 6.1-8

MARK 9.2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them; 3 and his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. 6. For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid. 7 And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud. This is my beloved Son: hear ye him. 8 And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves. 9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead. 10 And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.

2 PETER 1.16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: 18 and this voice we *ourselves* heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER WITNESSES THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS, Mark 9.2-4. Six days after the events in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus took with him his three favored disciples, Peter, James and John (the three who were with him in the death-chamber of the daughter of Jairus, at the grave of Lazarus, and in the Garden of Gethsemane), and ascended a high mountain where he was transfigured before them. Had the disciples been perplexed and anxious during that week? Did that mysterious announcement of their Master's coming suffering and death seem to them so utterly impossible for him whom they had declared the Christ that they were even faltering in their faith? On the Mount the answer came, and then they knew that, however the mystery was to be explained, their Master was the very Son of God. The Transfiguration with its revelation of glory and power dispelled all despondency.

Jesus was transfigured. The fashion of his countenance was altered, says Luke (Lk. 9.29); his face did shine as the sun, says Matthew (Mt. 17.2). It was not a splendor that fell on his face from without, and lighted it up; the glory came from within. Even the face of Moses shone after he had been communing with God on the Mount, and after hours spent in prayer (Lk. 9.29), Jesus would be exalted in spirit and a new light would shine from his face, his whole aspect would be changed. John G. Paton in his autobiography speaks of the wonder and awe with which he and his brother would notice the beautiful light on their father's face as he appeared after a time of seclusion when he had been talking with God.

"I take the Transfiguration to be a great lesson in prayer, and I urge that more and more it should enter into our life. It is difficult. It will not be accomplished without a strenuous effort to shake ourselves free of the clinging material things, but it is worth far more than all the effort we can make. We are living as if this world were all, and often as if there were no God; and I believe that the constant habit would alter that. It would introduce us to a larger life. It would not change our circumstances, but it might change our spirit" (Charles Brown).

And his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. (A fuller was one who fulled cloth, thickened it by moistening, beating and pressing. Our illustration is an Egyptian representation of two fullers pounding cloth with pieces of wood upon inclined tables from which the water runs off into troughs below.) "It was as if a monarch had been walking in disguise; only occasionally beneath his humble garment had been revealed a glimpse of the purple and

the gold. Here, for a time, the disguise is withdrawn, and the king appears in his real majesty and in the regal splendor of his divine glory" (C. R. Erdman).

"If anybody says to me that he has never seen anything like that—that raiment should become white and glistening while a man prays—I simply say, I have never seen anyone praying as Jesus prayed. But I will tell you what I have seen. I have seen a face light up; I have seen a man give his heart to God, and seen the new light come out of his eye, and his face shine with a radiance that certainly was not reflected from anything that was in the room. I have seen hard features transfigured into softness and tenderness by the incoming of the master-passion of love. And your poet has taught you about the man whose face is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' And everybody knows the action of thought upon the countenance; there can be no doubt about thought showing through the integument of the skin. And if love and thought can shine through the integument of the skin—well, how much more love will you require before you illumine the garments?" (F. L. Wiseman).

Egyptian Fullers

"I tell you we can all be transfigured, and in our homes where people know us best they will see the radiance" (J. H. Jowett).

And Moses and Elijah appeared, talking with Jesus. "This part of the account shows that the disciples had gained a new appreciation of Jesus. Moses was the emancipator of Israel and her lawgiver—the founder of the Hebrew nation. Elijah was the first of the great prophets; his ministry began a new era which transformed the religion of Israel. At the beginning of the Christian era, Elijah was regarded as a kind of semi-heavenly guardian of the Jewish people. Moses and Elijah were the two greatest of the religious leaders of the past. At last the disciples were putting Jesus in the right place. They were seeing him in proper perspective. He had told them that he was the Messiah; now they had adjusted their minds to the fact. Jesus was greater than the founders and heroes of their religion; Moses and Elijah came to talk with him—to pay him homage."

II. PETER'S FOOLISH REQUEST, Mark 9.5, 6. The three wearied disciples had wrapped their garments about them and lain down to rest upon the bare ground. They had fallen asleep, and on awaking suddenly, they saw the glory of Christ and saw two men standing with him (Lk. 9.32). Then Peter spoke: "Rabbi," he exclaimed, "it is good for us to be here." And he was right.

"But where in those three years had they come to a place where it was not good to be with the Master?" questions Dr. J. R. Miller. "And—is it different today? The hour of vision—yes, surely that is good for us, a light to shine down all the years. But no less good is it for us to walk with the Master the common paths of every day, full of common duties and anxieties and joys and troubles; no less good even the dark road of sorrow."

"Peter was startled and confused and afraid, and knew not what to say," is Mark's comment upon Peter's next observation.

"Peter belonged to that rather numerous class of persons who, when they do not know what to say, say it. I am glad he did. He said about what I would have said if I had been there, or rather what I would have thought without daring to say" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah," was Peter's expressed desire. It was a foolish remark, by no means the only foolish remark that Peter made, but, as Bishop McDowell reminds us, Peter's remarks have, nevertheless, a very high average. "He could risk his reputation on his reply at Cæsarea Philippi and his address at Pentecost: indeed, these two utterances would float a good deal of talk which was not in itself up to their level." Peter's remark was foolish because he argued, It is good for us to be here, therefore let us stay here! "In that moment Peter had come perilously near the condition of

the man who said, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up . . . take thine ease.' The temptation that assailed him was the temptation of the monk in the Legend Beautiful, which closes with the words, 'Had'st thou stayed, I must have fled.' Peter voted for staying. It is the temptation that assails every soul that rises to the high place. It is peculiar to mountain-top experiences. Privileges tend to selfishness." (J. N. Britton).

Jesus answered Peter's suggestion by turning at once and ministering to the need at the foot of the mountain, Mk. 9.

"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing myself away
To everlasting bliss,"

is a song that Peter would have liked to sing. It is not the song that our Lord would have him sing. We do not serve God best by visions and raptures. We serve him best by serving others.

"Not always on the Mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be;
The Mount for vision—but below
The paths of daily duty go."

III. THE CLOSE OF THE SCENE, Mark 9.7, 8. While they were speaking there came a cloud that overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud was heard proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." The words are similar to those recorded as spoken at the baptism of Jesus. And suddenly the disciples looking around saw no one with them save Jesus.

"They saw no man save Jesus only. He filled their horizon. He must fill ours" (E. Stanley Jones).

"Whether the Transfiguration was a wholly objective reality, or a wholly subjective experience, or a combination of both, its significance is the same. The vision came to convince the disciples of the truth of Jesus's announcement, and to hearten them in the face of it. Among other things it taught them: (1) Messiahship and martyrdom are the divine plan; (2) the character of the Messianic Kingdom is above all things spiritual; (3) Jesus is indeed the Messiah; they had not been mistaken; (4) Judaism is not overthrown, but glorified in Jesus; (5) I owe submission to but one, and that one is Jesus: 'Hear ye him' " (W. P. Beham).

IV. THE VISION KEPT A SECRET, Mark 9.9, 10. The three kept this vision to themselves, and told no one till after the resurrection, as Jesus bade, but they kept questioning among themselves what Jesus had meant by speaking of a rising again from the dead.

V. WHAT PETER WROTE ABOUT THE EVENT, 2 Peter 1.16-18. When Peter had grown old he recorded in the letter which we call Second Peter his remembrance of the wonderful event which we have just been studying in the Gospel of Mark. "When we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we did not follow cunningly devised fables," he wrote, "but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

In Mrs. Orr's biography of Robert Browning we hear the poet reading the latter part of the Epilogue to Dramatis Personæ:—

"That one face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Becomes my universe that sees and knows."

"That face," said Browning, closing the book, "is the face of Jesus the Christ; that is how I feel about it." And that was how Peter felt about it. That vision on "the holy mount" never left him, and the voice of "The Majestic Glory" continued to ring in his ears, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

**"Fountain of life, in thee alone is light!
Shine through our being, cleansing us of sin,
Till we grow lucid with thy presence bright,
The peace of God within"** (Lucy Larcom).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Let us make three tabernacles, Mark 9.5. Peter proposed doing what any Galilean peasant would do today if arrested by nightfall on a bleak and exposed hillside. He

would at once, rather than travel in the night, look out for brushwood and rushes and quickly weave a few loose, rough hurdles to form a screen from the wind.—H. B. Tristam.

When passing through the village of Banais (the modern Cæsarea Philippi), I saw a curious sight. On the roof of every house there was a kind of booth made of leaves and branches woven together, and supported on long poles, like the canopy of a four-post bed. It was made mostly of oleander bushes—the willow of Scripture—whose leaves do not when they wither fall off the twigs. During the summer months the heat inside the squalid mud-houses is unbearable; and the inhabitants take refuge in the airier dwellings on the roof; and the thick screen of foliage above their heads protects them from the heavy dews at night. It was of such booths or tabernacles that Peter was thinking.—Hugh Macmillan, in Expository Times.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What presumptuous remark have we heard Peter make? What words of Jesus led him to speak thus?

The Time. The week which followed Peter's acknowledgment that he knew Jesus to be divine, must have been no ordinary one in the training of The Twelve. They were uninterrupted, for they were away from the crowds that constantly followed them in Galilee. Jesus had told them that he must suffer and die and be raised again.

The Place. Since the fourth century Mount Tabor, on the northeastern boundary of the Plain of Esdraelon, has been regarded as the traditional Mount of Transfiguration. The summit was crowned by a fortified village in Christ's time, and

Mount Hermon

therefore it is improbable that it could have been here that Jesus went up the mountain to pray. Nevertheless, today both the Greek and the Roman Catholic Church have shrines marking the spot of the Transfiguration, and multitudes of pilgrims climb to the Latin monastery above whose chapel is written, *Hic Filius Dei Dilectus Transfiguratus Est:* Here the Chosen Son of God was Transfigured.

Jesus and his disciples were in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi the week before, and scholars are agreed that the scene must have been one of the spurs of Mount Hermon which towers above the city, rising to a height of nine thousand five hundred feet above sea level. It is always snow capped, and the Arabs call it Ice Mountain, also White-haired Mountain, for the snow lies in long streaks in its ravines. "As Mount Hermon is the culminating center of this region, so the Transfiguration is the culmination of the history which henceforth descends through the valley of humiliation unto death."

The Purpose of the Transfiguration. As the Baptism with its voice was the prelude to the ministry, so the Transfiguration with its voice was the prelude to the cross. The Transfiguration marks a crisis in Christ's own inward history. "It had a greater meaning and value for himself, than it could possibly have had for his disciples," writes a discerning interpreter of this event. "The truth is, surely, that the Transfiguration was designed for the preparation of Jesus himself, and only secondarily for a revelation to the disciples. The transaction between the heavenly Father and the Son must remain mysterious to us, since we fall short of the standard of manhood shown in Christ. The context of the incident in the Gospels is very significant: the story lies in a framework of Passion-discourses: it is preceded and followed by Christ's own personal predictions of suffering, death and resurrection. The Transfiguration was the preparation of Christ for his Exodus. On the mountain, Jesus laid himself like another Isaac on the altar, and he knew that the sacrifice would be demanded. The very glory of the event contains a hint of the struggle which had been going on in his mind. Jesus was no impassive hero of a romantic history: he was a Soul in the agony of a momentous spiritual transaction. The hour had come when he was to make a voluntary dedication of himself for a sacrifice than which history knows no sublimer: and this self-consecration was destined to be met by a distinct communication of divine approval. As he was praying about his Passion, he entered into the ecstasy of oneness with the heavenly Father: in the heart of Jesus all the holy resolutions of a lifetime were encouraged and strengthened, as the fashion of his countenance became changed."

The Epistle of Second Peter. Almost the entire Epistle of Jude, with very slight changes, is included in Second Peter. Did Peter copy from Jude, or did Jude copy from Peter? Some one has guessed that perhaps Jude, written on a single leaf, was accidentally slipped in between the two leaves of Second Peter, and thus became the second chapter of the latter.

"But the other chapters also are denied to Peter by many scholars," as Dean Hodges writes, "even from the time of Origen in the third century, by whom it is first mentioned. 'Peter,' he says, 'left one epistle which is generally accepted, and, if you will, a second which is questioned.' A rather later date is suggested by the reference (3.4) to the 'last days,' since the fathers 'fell asleep'; and to the epistles of Paul, collected, and set up reverently with the 'other scriptures' (3.15, 16)."

Chapter one is the introduction of the letter; chapter two, a warning against the false teachers; chapter three, an answer to those who denied the second coming of Christ.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Henri Poincaré, in his book, Science and Method, tells how his discoveries in mathematics—and few men have made more or greater—came to him in sudden flashes. True, he had been seeking these things, but he did not arrive at them by process of conscious reasoning. They arrived, as it were, and often in irrelevant times and places, when his mind was engaged with other matters—all of which goes to show that while we have faculties that are essentially acquisitive, that go out and seek the truth, we have others the nature of which is receptive, they are there to receive such truth as may come to us; and both are essential to our knowledge of truth.

Now Poincaré adds in his account of his experiences that these discoveries of which he speaks had been preceded by spells of intense mental concentration on the subject. He had gone out, as it were, resolutely to meet the truth, and then the truth had come to meet him. From this we may infer that no man will understand Jesus who does not put all his mind he has to the task. That, indeed, will not of itself bring a full understanding of Jesus; but without it there can be no understanding at all. Yet if a man will do this thing, the rest will come; and the process by which it comes we call revelation.—Richard Roberts, in That One Face.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MAJESTY AND GLORY OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Even as Moses, through whom God gave the law, went up into a mountain to receive it, and as Elijah, through whom God rebuked those who broke the law, went up into a mountain for his commission, so Jesus, who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, went up also into a mountain to commune with God. What happened there?

The Purpose of the Transfiguration. Surely we must feel, as we read the simple, graphic account which is given by the first three Gospels, that we also are like Peter, and know not what to say. The Transfiguration of Christ is one of those wonderfully beautiful things which seem to defy analysis or description. When we try to conjure up the scene, imagination fails, and fancy, dazzled by the radiance, folds her wings before her eyes and is lost in dreams. Vainly has the genius of poet and painter attempted to depict the soft glory of that event. The highest achievement even of a Raphael falls far short of the reality; and his great picture in the Vatican is in fact only a confession of the impotence of the loftiest art to rise to the level of the divine.

But while the actual wonder—the burst of splendor which irradiated and transformed the body of our Lord—must remain for us a bright, inexplicable mystery, there are many details which one can study and bring out more clearly; and this will certainly help us to understand it better.

In the first place we ought to notice what may have hitherto escaped our attention, the time and the circumstances of the event. It was not thrown by chance into the history of Christ—a strong flash of glory falling without design into the darkness of his lowly life. There was a reason why it should come just then. There was a close connection between the Transfiguration and the events which preceded and followed it.

It was just one week after that memorable day at Cæsarea Philippi, when the noble impulsiveness of Peter had led him to make that confession of faith which Christ said should be the foundation-stone of his church. But do you remember also what came after that? Do you remember that Jesus Christ began to teach his disciples that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again? These were hard lessons for the disciples to learn, just at the moment when their faith in the Master was opening its first buds of promise. The Gospels make no secret of the fact that they did not, would not, could not believe them.

The week that followed this announcement of his approaching crucifixion is passed over in silence by the Gospels. But we can easily believe that it was spent by Christ in close and loving intercourse with his disciples, trying to familiarize them with this sorrowful thought. And then, one evening, when the sun was sinking in the western sky and the cool hush of twilight was falling upon the weary world, he separated himself from the larger company, and taking with him the three men who were nearest to his human heart—the three who had most need and most fitness for such a revelation as was coming—he went up into a high mountain to pray.

Jesus prayed there—prayed for his disciples, that their faith might receive some encouragement, that their eyes might be opened like the eyes of Elisha's servant, to see the invisible glories about them—prayed for himself, that he might receive some fresh assurance of his Father's love and favor to strengthen and support his heart. And then—as when a great light is kindled within a cathedral, and the dark windows are transformed into fountains of radiance blazing out into the night—then, by some ebullition of spiritual splendor from within, the soul of Jesus sent out a flood of celestial light and he was transfigured. The celestial form shone through the earthly framework, so that his face was like the sun and his raiment glistering white as light.

Surely we cannot fail to see the purpose of this marvelous event. It was to uplift and cheer the soul of Jesus with the thought of the glory into which he should return by the sorrowful way of the cross. It was a foretaste of the exceeding great reward of his sacrificial love. It was a touch of the joy of heaven to help him bear the sufferings of earth.—Unknown.

The Source of Christ's Glory. I ardently believe in the divinity of Jesus. I behold his glory and I feel sure that the glory indicates the divine source whence it came. The sun sets, we see that luminary no more, darkness comes on apace. Then the moon rises, and two things immediately become evident, the second of which is more reassuring than the first. The moonlight drives away the darkness and quenches many lesser lights of the stars; but the true glory of the moon is that it says "The sun is shining." All its splendor, all its glory, all the radiance of its face, comes from the light of the sun; although we cannot see the sun, the sight of the moon in the darkness is the evidence that the sun has lost none of its brilliance.

So in this dark world, where no man has ever seen God, and where even the highest conceptions of him must be inadequate, the appearance of Jesus is the best evidence not only of God's existence, but of his love.—William Lyon Phelps.

How to Gain a Knowledge of his Majesty and Glory. I remember once going to Switzerland with the special purpose of seeing the Matterhorn. I had long wished to see it, but alas! when the ambition seemed likely to be realized, the weather was not propitious. Day after day I went out of my hotel in the morning, only to see the mountain swathed in cloud. Sometimes as I looked at the giant precipices rising up into their mist-clad summit the old prayer of Moses would come to my mind—"Show me thy glory."

And at last the mountain seemed to answer my prayer. It showed me its glory. One morning as I went out to my accustomed prospect, the mountain stood revealed. The stark pyramid stood forth from its surrounding snow, amid the eternal silences of the blue Alpine sky, beautiful in the morning light.

So, if we wait long enough for God to reveal himself, he will come to us; he will show us his glory. "Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye shall seek me with all your heart." The clouds of doubt and ignorance will flee away. God will reveal himself to us in his glory. And what is the glory of God? "The glory of God" is "the face of Jesus Christ."—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in Bible Types of Modern Men.

The Knowledge and Its Effect. The man who will sit down for twenty minutes in his room and look at the character of Jesus Christ, feels his longest life not long enough—nay, that eternity itself is not long enough—to approach the surpassing and infinite glory of that Figure. Then a new sensation comes. He rises, and—what? He is hungry and thirsty to live like that; to have in himself the mind which was in Christ Jesus.—Henry Drummond.

Lord of All.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all.

One who Never Saw the Glory of Jesus.

Joses, the brother of Jesus, plodded from day to day
With never a vision within him to glorify his clay;
Joses, the brother of Jesus, was one with the heavy clod,
But Christ was the soul of rapture, and soared, like a lark, with God;
Joses, the brother of Jesus, was only a worker in wood,
And he never could see the glory that Jesus his brother could.
"Why stays he not in the workshop," he often used to complain,
"Sawing the Lebanon cedar, imparting to woods their stain?
Why must he go thus roaming, forsaking my father's trade,
While hammers are busily sounding, and there is gain to be made?"
Thus ran the mind of Joses, apt with plummet and rule,
And deeming whoever surpassed him either a knave or a fool—
For he never walked with the prophets in God's great garden of bliss;
And of all the mistakes of the ages the saddest, methinks, was this:
To have such a brother as Jesus, to speak with him day by day,
Yet never to catch the vision which glorified his clay.
—Harry Kemp, in The Christian Century.

For Discussion. 1. Crises in the life of Jesus.

2. The power of exalted moments. See Chapter XXII, Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What had Peter boasted only a few hours before he denied Jesus? 2. How do you account for Peter's denials? 3. Moses was meek—how did he fall? 4. Abraham is honored for his faith—how did he distrust God? 5. Solomon was noted for wisdom—how did he show folly? 6. Are we liable to fall when we feel ourselves most secure?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT PETER SAW AND HEARD ON THE MOUNT

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus took Peter, James and John and went up into a mountain to pray, so Luke tells us in Lk. 9.28. We know that Jesus had the

habit of prayer. It was probably at dusk that they ascended, for on reaching the desired spot the disciples were drowsy and slept, Lk. 9.32. So we may think of the four as "slowly and thoughtfully climbing the mountain at eventide, carrying their abbas, or rugs, on which they would kneel for prayer, and which, if they needed rest, they would wrap around them, as is the oriental custom. By the time they reached the top, night would have cast its veil of mystery on the grandeur of the mountains round about them; while snowy Hermon in the gloom would rise like a mighty giant to heaven."

When Peter suddenly awoke, what did he see? What did he say? What did he hear? What did he write about it all long afterwards?

What Prayer Can Do. Peter and James and John learned a lesson about prayer. They learned that prayer can change surroundings. It was while Jesus prayed that the scene was transformed. The dull, dark spot where they had lain down to sleep had become a bit of fairyland. Even Jesus's raiment glistened as if shot through with jewels. Will prayer do that for us? In a way, yes. Prayer lifts one into new regions, into a new atmosphere, into the quiet places of God.

Up on the mountain they had left Jesus alone, and when they awoke there were others with him—two of the mighty dead, two of the great leaders of the past were talking with him. Prayer does that for us. We pray for some dear, far-away friend, and the act calls up his face and his ways, brings him so vividly before us that it almost seems as if he were present with us. We pray for Christ's help and guidance, and we feel his presence with us.

Upon the mountain Peter and John discovered that prayer changes a person. They thought they knew Jesus, but there discovered something they had never seen in him before, a beauty and a glory they had not suspected. His face was always lovable, but now it was glorious. It was as full of light and glory as a cloud that has sailed into the setting sun. And the change had come about while he prayed. Prayer had thrust the veil aside and let the glory through. Can prayer do that for you? Old faces, tired faces, faces of the sick and suffering have been transfigured by prayer. The love, the faith, the earnestness, the deep emotions of their souls have simply illumined their faces and made them radiant. No one can pray constantly without showing the effects of it in face and character and life. Prayer can put a beauty into faces and lives that nothing else can.

Changed Faces. In all the world there are no two faces exactly alike. Is this not a marvelous fact? What makes a face beautiful? Sometimes it is the faultless features and coloring. Sometimes it is a beautiful spirit shining through the face.

No one could call Whittier's face handsome, for his features were homely, but one who knew him said that his face was better than handsome, it was beautiful, for it was a transparency, the spirit within lighted it up.

When Emerson stood at the bier of his friend Longfellow he had lost his memory for faces, and he said, "I do not know who he is, but I know that he must have had a beautiful soul." Goodness looking out of a face makes that face beautiful to one who has eyes to see.

A Japanese woman visited a mission boarding-school one day and said to the missionary, "Tell me, does your principal take only pretty girls?" "Oh, no, indeed, she takes all girls." "But there is a different look on the faces of these girls from that seen on most Japanese girls." "That is because we cultivate the soul here," answered the gentle-voiced teacher. "Well, I'm not a Christian," said the Japanese woman; "I don't want my daughter to be a Christian—but I'd like to get that look on her face."

Dr. Robert E. Speer on his return from India said that he could pick out the Christians there from the light on their faces.

It is not only in mission lands that Christians have bright, happy faces. A factory girl in England who had given herself to Christ was walking up and down the platform of a railway station, waiting for her train, when a lady of title, wealth and culture called to her from the window of a train that was standing there, and asked, "What makes you look so happy?" The girl told her story and the result of their brief conversation was that her questioner was led to seek and find the same Savior. Dr. Morgan knew them both, and told the incident.

"God has given you one face and you make yourselves another," declares Shakespeare. Is he right? You remember how Ernest, in Hawthorne's beautiful allegory, daily gazed on the Great Stone Face, admiring its dignity, serenity and

benevolence, until he came, all unconsciously to himself, to possess the same qualities. He became so transformed that at last he was revealed to his neighbors as the long-promised one who should be like the Great Stone Face. This allegory teaches a great truth. We grow like that on which we think and meditate: we grow like that which we earnestly wish to become. And if we wish to grow like Christ we must keep much in the company of Christ.

The Triumph of a Beautiful Soul. There is a painting of Domenico Ghirlando called "An Old Man and a Child," and very interesting is its history. One day the artist chanced to look down from his upper window and see a crowd of boys jeering an old man. He caught sight of the man's face, and truly it was repulsive, he thought, with its abnormal nose, inflamed and swollen to three times its proper size, and covered with wart-like growths. Seizing a crayon he sketched the face and roared with laughter at the comical result. A few days later he was directed to the house of "a frame-maker with a bloated nose," for he was seeking some one who could make a fine frame for one of his pictures. Up three flights he climbed, and as he paused to regain his breath at the door he heard the prattle of a child. A little boy in rich attire stood near a liveried servant; then suddenly he rushed back into the room and threw himself upon the old man who sat near a window. Ghirlando caught his breath: "Saints in heaven, what a picture!" he murmured to himself. On the little lad's face there was a look of perfect confidence, trust, love; to him the deformed old man was good and beautiful. And the old man, a sweet, true soul beaming from his eyes, a kindly smile transfiguring his face, made an impression in the artist's memory that he put on canvas. The poor old gilder and the scion of one of the wealthiest houses of Florence—both alike pure and childlike. "When your ceilings and your St. Jeromes are forgotten," said Botticelli to him as he gazed at the wonderful picture, "this presentation of the triumph of a beautiful soul will be treasured as your masterpiece."

Be Ye Transformed by the Renewing of your Mind. We will try to get the meaning of this text of Paul's by a story.

There was once a dawdling little boy who was walking home with his mother. "Why don't you hurry up?" the mother said. "Well, I'm tired; besides, I can't walk so fast as you can." Then the mother hit on a happy idea. She knew how fond he was of playing with engines. So she said, "Be a little steam engine." All at once his eyes sparkled, his fists were clenched and, piston-like, began to go round and round, and his pace quickened. They were home in "no time," and all because a tired, dawdling little boy had been transformed, so to speak, into a swift-running, dashing "steam engine."

That sums up the meaning of our text. Not so difficult, after all, is it? The little boy had been "transformed"—changed—"by the renewing of his mind," as the text puts it. That is to say, instead of thinking of himself as a tired boy, whose feet were slow, he just imagined himself as a quick, dashing engine—a change of thought that made all the difference.

Yes, it's a wonderful secret. Let us look at it again. We will imagine you get up some morning feeling sulky and cross. You feel "out of sorts" with everybody. You criticize this, that, and everything. Then presently, calming down a bit, you go upstairs and have a quiet "think" all by yourself, and a quiet talk with Jesus. Then you begin to see how wrong it is to be sulky and cross with everybody and you decide to be bright and happy and cheerful instead.

Then what happens? You come downstairs again, and, well!—you are not the same child. The clouds have gone, the sulkiness has all gone.—Condensed from a story by A. Russell Tomlin.

Sentence Sermons.

"Beautiful thoughts make a beautiful soul,
And a beautiful soul makes a beautiful face."

"Beautiful faces are those that wear
The light of a pleasant spirit there;
It matters little if dark or fair."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who were "they," in our first verse? 2. How did the maid know that Peter was a Galilean, as we are told in Mt. 26.73? 3. What was Peter's confident boast early on the last evening which he spent with Jesus? (Mt. 26.35.) 4. How did Peter fail Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? (Mt. 26.36-45.) 5. Why did Peter deny Jesus? 6. How is Jesus sometimes denied today?

LESSON V—MAY 1

PETER'S DENIAL AND REPENTANCE

GOLDEN TEXT: Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10.12

LESSON Mark 14.53, 54, 66-71; Luke 22.61, 62

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 51.1-9

MARK 14.53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54 And Peter had followed him afar off even within, into the court of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light *of the fire.*

66 And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and saith, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, *even* Jesus. 68 But he denied, saying, I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69 And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them. 70 But he again denied it. And after a little while they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art *one* of them; for thou art a Galilæan. 71 But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

LUKE 22.61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And he went out, and wept bitterly.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. IN THE PALACE OF THE HIGH PRIEST, Mark 14.53, 54. The time is after the betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Two painful scenes are being enacted in the palace of the high priest. Above, in the Assembly Hall, stands Jesus before the Sanhedrin (chief priests and elders and scribes), the Judge of the World is being judged by men obsessed by hatred, bent on delivering him up to death.

Below in the courtyard sits Peter. He had followed Jesus afar off, and had entered "even within, into the court of the high priest," Mark tells us. The expression is redundant, and "suggests the idea of one stealthily feeling his way into the court of the palace, venturing farther and farther in, and gaining courage with each step."

The courtyard was the inner quadrangle, around which the palace was built. With the officers (doubtless the military guard who had delivered up their Prisoner and were waiting for further orders), Peter was warming himself by the fire which glowed in an open charcoal brazier. In the spring the nights are cold at Jerusalem and a fire is welcome.

"Sullen, and apprehensive at a word,
Peter, the bold disciple of his Lord,
Crouches above the brazier's slender flame,
Flinching to hear his too familiar name
Bandied with Christ's, defiant to deny,
Lest one should fiercely whisper, 'Crucify!'
The tongue, abrupt to censure or confess,
Is stifled by occasion's harsh distress;
The steady eye that flamed in love or hate
Shifts from wide eye to eye of them that wait.
O Peter! Canst thou thus so soon forget
The grace on Hermon's Mount that hallowed thee,
While yet the tears upon his cheeks are wet,
From Bethany and grim Gethsemane?" (Elwood Lindsay Haines).

"We have a certain respect for him; we follow him in some far off way, and we think we love him; but we love Self a great deal more, and when the test comes, when some high priest of religion derides him, and some Pilate or other delivers him to be crucified, we who should have been his confessors slink away in fear and shame, warming our chilled hands by some alien, hostile fire; while our lips are frozen into silence, or they only speak in words of treachery and denial" (Henry Burton).

II. PETER'S DENIAL, Mark 14.66-71. When Jesus was questioned by Annas in regard to his disciples, he refused to say anything that might bring them into trouble (Jn. 18.19-21), but when questioned about his Lord, Peter the Rock, who had sworn

eternal faithfulness to his Master, denied him altogether. One of the maids of the high priest approached him and said, "Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus." "'That Jesus,' spoken in a contemptuous manner, a faithful echo of the tone of her superiors" (Expositor's Greek Testament). "There were the malignant faces ringing him round; the rabble crew crowding about the fire; and then that girl's face, impudent, gay, triumphant, flashing out in the firelight the sudden challenge that struck him with swift terror, so that ere he knew, he had stammered out his first fatal denial" (Ralph Connor).

"I neither know nor understand what thou sayest," Peter returned. His grievous failure arose from his lack of intellectual certainty, F. W. Norwood thinks. He was utterly bewildered by the happenings of the night. He had struck off the ear of the high priest's servant, and his Master had not only healed the smitten antagonist but had yielded to his own capture without a struggle. Peter was "puzzled beyond expression and utterly disheartened. What could a man do if he might not fight for his Lord? He could see no way out, and in this frame of mind he could succumb even to the taunt of a girl. It is lack of imagination which makes us regard a certain 'maid' as the most puerile of Peter's opponents that day. Any one who has lived through some such experience, or can think his way sympathetically through the experience of Peter, will know that in that moment and in that mood her light shaft of ridicule could only have been resisted by the greatest moral heroism."

An Oriental Brazier

"Intellectual conviction is always required to maintain courage in steady strength" (F. W. Norwood).

He went out into the porch; and the cock crew. There are slight differences in the narratives as told by all the Evangelists. In Mt. 26.74, 75, it is the crowing of the cock which recalls Peter to his senses. In Luke it is Christ's look which reminds Peter of his words, "Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice."

"And now, though ages intervene
Sin is the same, while time and scene
Are shifted.
For all at last the cock will crow
Who hear the warning voice, but go
Unheeding.
Till thrice and more they have denied
The Man of Sorrows, crucified
And bleeding" (Longfellow).

"This is one of them," the maid declared, turning to those standing by, and again Peter denied it. A little later, after Peter had been talking and had betrayed by his speech that he came from Galilee, Mt. 26.27, his companions said to him, "Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean." The speech of Galilee is said to have been more guttural than that of Judea, and substituted *t* for *s*.

Then Peter lost control of himself completely, and began to curse and to swear. He invoked a curse upon himself if what he were telling were not true when he said, "I know not this Man of whom ye speak." "It was probably not the first time that Peter swore," observes Henry Drummond. "A man does not suddenly acquire the habit of uttering oaths; and when it is said of Peter, 'then began he to curse and to swear' it does not at all mean by 'then' and 'began' that he had not begun it long

ago. The legitimate inference is, that in the rough days of his fisherman's life, when the nets got entangled, perhaps, or the right wind would not blow, Peter had come out many a time with an oath to keep his passion cool. And now, after years of devoted fellowship with Christ, the stain is still so black upon his soul that he curses in the very presence of his Lord."

"An outbreak which meets the public eye is generally the climax of a series of sins, which discretion has been able, till then, to keep out of sight. The doctrine of the stain of sin has no exceptions; and few men, we may be sure, can do a suddenly notorious wrong without knowing something in private of the series to which it belongs" (Henry Drummond).

III. PETER'S PENITENCE, Luke 22.61, 62. A stairway led from the court to the room above, and we may think of Jesus as being led down it when he turned and looked upon Peter. "Had it been an angry look Peter saw on Christ's face when their eyes met, his might have been the fate of Judas. But there was not a spark of anger in it. There was pain, no doubt, and there was immeasurable disappointment. But deeper than these—rising up from below and submerging them—there was the Savior's instinct, that instinct which made him reach out his hand and grasp Peter when he was sinking in the sea. With the same instinct he grasped him now. In that look of an instant Peter saw forgiveness and unutterable love" (James Stalker).

From Mrs. Browning's poem, The Meaning of the Look, comes this beautiful thought:—

"For when thy final need is dreariest,
Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here;
My voice to God and angels shall attest,
Because I know this man, let him be clear."

"The thridde sign (of a good confession) is that the shrift should be full of teres, if men mowen wepe; and if they mowe not wepe with hir bodily eyen, then let hem wepe in hir herte. Swiche was the confession of Saint Peter; for after he had forsaken Jesus Christ, he went out and wept full bitterly" (Chaucer).

"O Jesus, gone so far apart
Only my heart can follow thee,
That look which pierced St. Peter's heart
Turn now on me.

Thou who dost search me through and through,
And mark the crooked ways I went,
Look on me, Lord, and make me, too,
Thy penitent" (Christina Rossetti).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

But he began to curse and to swear, Mark 14.71. The scribes taught that oaths in which the name of God was not expressed were not oaths. Thus Maimonides, a famous rabbi, decreed: "If any one swears by heaven, by earth, by the sun, etc., although it is the intention of him who swears in these words to swear by him who created these things, yet this is not an oath; or, if one swears by one of the prophets or by one of the books of Scripture, although it is the purpose of the swearer to swear by him who sent that prophet or who gave that book, nevertheless this is not an oath."

Dr. George D. Boardman gives this quotation and adds: "It is not strange that under such teachings people should have become terribly addicted to profanity. Swearing became to them almost as natural as breathing. Accordingly I do not wonder that when Peter in a moment of weakness and fright denied his Master, he fell back into his old Jewish habits."

The Lord turned and looked upon Peter, Luke 22.61. The tradition arose that during Nero's persecution of the Christians, when they were set on fire to serve as torches in his gardens, and were put to brutal death in the amphitheater, Peter fled from Rome. A few miles from the city he had a vision of the Savior. *Domine, quo vadis,* Lord, whither goest thou? he cried. With a look that vividly recalled to Peter the look he had received from his Savior in the high priest's palace, Christ returned, "I go to Rome to be crucified the second time." It was enough. Peter

turned back and boldly bore his witness for Christ until he was himself crucified head downward for the sake of his Lord and Savior.

Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice, Luke 22.61. Although watches are becoming common in Syria, for the housewife, the peasant, and the muleteer, the cock is still the best night time-keeper. It crows more than once during the darkness. Particular cocks are said to be so exact and regular that they can easily be trusted as time-keepers.—M. Ghosn el-Howie.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was Peter's other name? Why did Jesus give him the name Peter? Has he earned the name? How has Peter before this shown his disregard of danger? How did he then fail? How did Jesus meet sudden temptations?

The Time. It is the night of the betrayal. On the way to the Mount of Olives Jesus had said to his disciples, "All ye shall be offended in me this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.'" Then said Peter, "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." "Verily I say unto thee," solemnly Jesus returned, "that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." And with the utmost confidence in himself Peter contradicted him saying, "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."

The Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered—all the disciples left him and fled. Peter and John followed afar off (Jn. 18.15).

"Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, him
Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life?
What should wring this from thee?"—ye laugh and ask.
What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that,
And it is written, "I forsook and fled":
There was my trial, and it ended thus.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE DANGER OF SUDDEN TEMPTATIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Every man at some time in his life has fallen. Many have fallen many times; few, few times. We have all shuddered before this as we read the tale of Peter's guilt. Many a time we have watched the plot as it thickened round him, and felt the almost unconscious sympathy which betrayed itself. How like the story was to one that had sometimes happened with ourselves! And we knew, as we followed the dreary stages of his fall, that the same well-worn steps in the garden, when he should have watched and prayed, all men who have an inner history can understand. The faithlessness that made him follow Christ far off, instead of keeping at his Master's side, not the best of us will challenge. For we, too, know what it is sometimes to get out of step with Christ. We will be the last to stop and ask his business in that worldly company who warmed themselves by the fire. And none who know that the heart is deceitful above all things will wonder that this man who had lived so long in the inner circle of fellowship with Christ, whose eyes were familiar with miracles, who was one of the most select audience who witnessed the glory of the Transfiguration—that this man, when his ears were yet full of the most solemn words the world had ever heard, when his heart was warm still with Communion-table thoughts, should have turned his back upon his Lord, and, almost ere the sacramental wine was dry upon his lips, have cursed him to his face. Such things, alas! are not strange to those who know the parts in the appalling tragedy of sin.

But there is a greater fact in Peter's life than Peter's sin—a much less known fact—Peter's penitence. All the world are at one with Peter in his sin; but not all the world are with him in his penitence. Sinful Peter is one man, and Repentant Peter is another; and many who have kept his company along these worn steps to sin have left him to trace the tear-washed path of penitence alone. But the real lesson in Peter's life is the lesson in repentance. His fall is a lesson in sin which requires no teacher, but his repentance is a great lesson in salvation.

The few words which form the pathetic sequel to the tale of Peter's sin may be defined as the "ideal progress of Christian penitence."

We find that the beginning of this strange experience came from God. It was not Peter who turned. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. When the cock crew that might have recalled him to himself, he was just in the very act of sin. And when a man is in the thick of his sin, his last thought is to throw down his arms and repent. So Peter never thought of turning, but the Lord turned; and when Peter would rather have looked anywhere else than at the Lord, the Lord looked at Peter. And this scarce-noticed fact is a great sermon to every one who sins—that the Lord turns first.

Now the result of this distinction is this: that there are two kinds of sorrow for sin. And these are different in their origin, in their religious value, and in their influence on our life. The commoner kind is when a man does wrong, and, in the ordinary sense of the word, is sorry that he has done it. This is a kind of sorrow which is well known to all who examine themselves, and in any way struggle with sin. But there is no real penitence there. It may not contain even one ingredient of true repentance. It is no true sorrow for sin. It is wounded self-love. It is sorrow that we were weak enough to sin. We thought we had been stronger men and women, and when we were put to the test we found to our chagrin that we had failed. And this chagrin is what we are apt to mistake for penitence. It is just as if Peter turned and looked upon Peter. And when Peter turns and looks upon Peter he sees what a poor, weak creature Peter is. And if God had not looked upon Peter he might have wept well-nigh as bitterly, not because he had sinned against his God, but because he, the great apostle, had done a weak thing—he was weak as other men.

Contrast for a moment with such a penitence the publican's prayer of penitence in the temple. It was no chagrin nor wounded pride with him. And we feel as we read the story that the Lord must have turned and looked upon the publican, when he cried "God"—as if God were looking right down into the man's eyes—"God be merciful to me, a sinner!" Stricken before his God, this publican had little thought of the self-respect he had lost, and felt it no indignity to take the culprit's place and be taught the true divinity of a culprit's penitence.

Now it will be seen at once that the difference between the publican's penitence and the first-named sorrow is just the difference between the human and the divine. The one is God turning and looking upon man, the other is man turning and looking upon himself. There is no wrong in a man turning and looking upon himself—only there is danger. There is the danger of misinterpreting what he sees and what he feels.

But what is complained of is not that it passes unresented by the mind, but that it passes unresented by the soul. Penitence of some sort there must be, but in the one case it is spiritual, in the other purely artistic. And the danger is the more subtle because the higher the character is, the more there must necessarily be of the purely artistic penitence.

The true experience, on the other hand, is a touching lesson in human helplessness; teaching him God has to come to man's relief at every turn of his life, and how the same hand which provides his pardon has actually to draw him to the place of penitence.—Condensed from The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond.

Let him that Thinketh he Standeth Take Heed lest he Fall. Naturalists tell us that amongst birds and butterflies the swiftest, strongest flyers approach man much nearer than those with weaker wings, feeling confident that they can dart away from any threatened danger—and this misplaced confidence brings them into the net of the collector. How often have we indulged a confidence similarly inspired and similarly misplaced, being betrayed into the very shadow of doom? Have we not taken liberties with thought and life to our tremendous peril? Considering ourselves, marking the pitfalls of the pathway, noting the foes of flesh and blood and the shadowy legions which throng the air, we cannot order our steps too warily. And we must not forget that our peril often lies in things which threaten least. In mountain ranges there is often a loose detritus especially dangerous to mountaineers, these loose or crumbling stones being called "the devil's stones," for, owing to their treacherous character, if you step on one incautiously you may be precipitated into the depth. There are many such stones in the path of life. False maxims with sophistical colorings; license stealing the name of liberty; harmful speculations, luring as grand chances; methods of trade outlined square, yet full of betrayal; sandy doctrines simulating the rock; friendships which are flowery graves; occupations,

recreations which promise rest and serve only to slip us into mire; these are the things of peril; life is full of them; and he only walks surely who walks discreetly. How often was that word "Watch" on the Master's lips! "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."—W. L. Watkinson, in Mistaken Signs.

A Fall is a Signal to Rise. "If anybody fell from this pier into the water would he be drowned?" an old boatman was asked. With a quizzical smile, he gave answer: "No, it's not falling into the water that drowns a man." "What, then, is it?" "Staying there!"

Christina Rossetti thus enforces the thought:—

> "A fall is not a signal to lie wallowing, but to rise.
> It is not the signal I should choose, yet it is the signal I have chosen.
> Having chosen it wrongly, let me at least obey it rightly."

Prepare for the Sudden Temptations. Sudden temptations are sure to come. "Prepare in trifles, so that you are ready for crises," is the wise counsel of Dr. Babcock. "If your oatmeal is burned at breakfast, take it calmly; then when your house is afire, you can meet that with calmness and composure, too." What you are doing now to meet your small temptations determines how you will meet the sudden great temptations when they come.

"I say unto you, Watch." Dr. Watkinson, I believe, is the authority for the statement that Alexander Humboldt, the scientist and naturalist, noticed that troops of wild horses in South America displayed a wonderful faculty for watchfulness against enemies. They were constantly hunted both by men and ferocious beasts, yet they discovered the approach of their foes at great distances and made marvelous escapes. At last Humboldt discovered the secret. The wild horses in their flight across the country divided themselves into three groups as regards the direction given to their ears. Those which led the van directed their ears forward, those in the center turned their ears toward either side, and those in the rear turned their ears backward, so that the whole troop was made aware of danger threatening from any quarter. They saved themselves by their watchfulness. And it is by constant watchfulness that we may save ourselves from our enemies, the sudden temptations that befall us.

Mrs. Gladstone told Mr. John Morley that whoever wrote her husband's life must remember that he had two sides—one impetuous, impatient, irrestrainable; the other all self-control, able to dismiss all but the great central aim, able to put aside what was weakening and disturbing. He had achieved this self-mastery, she said, at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. He had attained it by the natural power of his character and by incessant wrestling in prayer—prayer that had been abundantly answered.

"Beware," Peter himself cautions in his Second Epistle, "lest ye fall from your own steadfastness."

For Discussion. Few things are so stumbling as our own conceit of ourselves.—H. C. King. Fear to fall and assurance to stand are two sisters.—Thomas Fuller.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was John convinced by what he saw in the tomb? 2. What reasons had Peter and John for expecting that Christ would rise from the dead? Why did they not so expect? 3. What testimony to the resurrection of Jesus is borne by Peter in The Acts? 4. These are reasons for belief in the resurrection of Christ: the accounts in the Gospels; the change in the disciples; the conviction of the early church; the history of Christendom; the life of Jesus in the soul of his followers today: which is to you the most convincing proof? 5. What does the resurrection of Christ mean to you?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW JESUS IS DENIED TODAY

Beginning the Lesson. We have seen how wonderfully privileged Peter was from the time he left his nets to become a follower of Jesus. What great miracles did he see Jesus do? What remarkable power was given him on the Sea of Galilee? What lessons had he learned from the lips of Jesus? What great confession had he made at Cæsarea Philippi? How had he been awed at the Transfiguration?

During the days immediately preceding his base denial of Christ, Peter had listened to his Lord's last teachings, he had partaken with him the Last Supper, and had been warned to watch and pray. And then he fell so miserably!

We say of a vein or seam of ore which has become exhausted that it has petered out, and we use the same expression for anything that fails after promising better things. You will find the verb in the dictionary, though it is called slang. It has been coined from the name of Peter. If Peter had not repented and retrieved his name, he would have deserved to be thus dishonored. As we see him today, his discipleship has wholly petered out. How did it happen?

If you have read reports of people who were drowned at summer resorts, you have been struck by the fact that so many of them have been good swimmers. It was their own confidence in their ability to swim which made them take risks that poor swimmers would not think of taking.

Overconfidence was one of Peter's great failings. When have we seen this? We saw it when he started to walk across the water to Jesus and then, becoming fearful, cried, "Lord, save me." He was overconfident at the Last Supper with his Lord, when he exclaimed boastfully, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I." He was overconfident after the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane when he followed Jesus "afar off," thinking himself strong enough to go into temptation. Jesus knew Peter, and he had often warned him. In the Garden of Gethsemane he bade his overconfident disciple watch and pray lest he enter into temptation. We find him in the Court of Caiaphas, the high priest, and see his courage, which he thought all-sufficient, quail and give way. How?

In Quo Vadis there is an interesting contest between a gladiator and a net-thrower. The heavily armed gladiator is a giant, while the net-thrower is small, yet lithe and nimble. The net-thrower succeeds in casting the gossamer-like net over the giant, and despite his shield and breastplate and helmet and sword the giant is entangled and thus bound hand and foot. So it is with Peter. "I will lay down my life for thy sake," he had declared to his Lord; he meant it, too, and if a chance had come to prove him at that moment he would have stood the test. But the maid's question on that cold, dreary night after an exhausting experience proved the gossamer net that was his undoing. He denied his Lord, saying, "I neither know, nor understand, what thou sayest."

Looking into the Face of Christ. It was the language of looks which passed between our Lord and Peter that early morning in the high priest's house. What an expressive face Jesus must have had! How tender the expression which could entice the children to him and make them feel that he was the children's Friend! What a compassionate and sympathetic look that must have been which could make the common people flock to him! What lines of pain and sorrow must have marked that divine face as it turned to look on Peter! How terrible in its searching gaze it must have appeared to the scribes and Pharisees as they crept away one by one from his presence under his look of burning indignation! I can quite imagine that many a time it was not necessary for him to speak, for more than words could ever express was to be seen and read in his looks.

I want you to think about Christ's face, Christ's look. I want you to see the same face turned to you; Christ looking on you; Christ thinking of you. Yes, sometimes Christ is very sympathetic with you and pleased that, in spite of temptations to be otherwise, you are true and good; sometimes Christ is pained by you because, like Peter, you have forgotten his warning. For Christ is really Some one whom you can please; Some one whom you can pain. Don't you think that if you were conscious of such a face looking at you, you would often be inspired to do what was right, and be checked in doing what was wrong?

In the Russian and Japanese War there came a day when the Russians, shut up in Port Arthur, could hold out no longer. They saw that their chances of victory were gone. Everywhere in that besieged city there were the dying and the dead; and still the Japanese guns were pouring in their awful hail of shot and shell. General Stossel called his fellow officers together to discuss the situation, and whether the time had not come to surrender the city to the besiegers. They assembled in a plain room on the bare walls of which there hung only one picture, and that a large photograph of the Czar. As they looked at this picture and thought of what they were about to do many of these brave generals sobbed aloud. The eyes of the Czar seemed to be looking down upon them; what would he think of their action; what would he say? Looking up at the photograph General Stossel said, "It is not right that his majesty should witness such proceedings," and he ordered the removal of the picture from the walls. Those men could not bear the look of the Czar's eyes upon them; they were sorry and ashamed.

If we could really look upon Jesus, how it would help us. We think we should be so eager to know what he thought of our words and doings. We are sure we should find encouragement at times when we sorely need it. It would be so inspiring, we think, to see the smile of approval upon his face. But he is here. It is only the dulness of our eyes which keeps us from seeing him. There he stands, a radiant Figure in the history of every life. Some people see him and some don't. There are some whose hearts are in such sympathy with him and whose spiritual eyesight is so clear that they see him every day.

I think this is possible even to young people. Do you ever picture that beautiful face of Christ? Does it come to you like a glorious vision at the close of the day when you kneel at your bedside to pray? Do you see the face then, and do you go to sleep with the glad feeling that you close the day with the smile of Christ upon all that you have said and done? Does it come back to you in the morning, giving you encouragement as you look upon it with the commencement of the new day? And as you go about your simple duties do you sometimes look up and catch that kind, loving face of Christ watching you all the time? If you do not, I think you may if you will.—Condensed from the Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

Be on your Guard. Modern locomotives are powerful monsters, capable of climbing steep grades and hauling long, heavy trains. Nevertheless, engineers plan their road-beds so as to avoid all the steep grades possible, and the engines are all provided with brakes. Why is this? No matter how powerful the engine, it can do better work when its work is made as easy as possible, and no matter how near the summit it may have climbed there is still danger that without brakes it may slip backward. So it is with human workers. No matter how strong and true one's character may be, it is nevertheless necessary to make one's pathway as level as possible by avoiding the stumbling-blocks of temptation, and one needs to be ever on one's guard, ready to apply the brakes of caution, lest one slip backward.

"When I am weak, then am I strong." The one who realizes his weakness and in prayer seeks strength from above, is strong. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me," is the only rightful boast.

How a Boy Denied his Lord. "The coward," said Harry, "after being with Jesus for three years, and then cruelly desert him at the time when he most needed his friends! I know that I should have been faithful at any cost."

Several weeks passed; and one Sunday Mr. West noticed Harry seemed depressed, and he did not appear as interested in the lesson as usual. After the school was dismissed, Mr. West asked Harry to walk home with him.

"Well, Harry, what is it?" he asked, as soon as they were seated in Mr. West's study.

Harry looked very serious as he said, "Do you remember, Mr. West, what I said about Peter a few weeks ago?" Mr. West nodded his head.

"I am worse than Peter ever was. Yesterday some fellows from our school went fishing. You know Mr. Warren; the boys called him a hypocrite, and said that his profession of Christianity is only a cloak to hide his meanness. The boys said that Christians were no better than other people, and they quoted irreverently from the Bible, saying things to which no Christian should have listened and remained silent! And I never said a word!"—Serena Clark, in The Classmate.

Sentence Sermons.

Alone and crushed, his enemies close by,
With hasty speech Peter denied his Lord.
Yet safe and careless, with light laughter, I
Denied him with the small, unspoken word.—Ethel A. McNish.

Those who feel secure in their virtues should remember that "fire-proof buildings" sometimes burn.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire twentieth and twenty-first chapters of John. 2. What can you learn about Mary Magdalene from Lk. 8.2; 23.49, 55; 24.1-10? 3. What is the message of Christ's resurrection to us? 4. What boast had Peter made of having greater love for Jesus than the other disciples had? (Mt. 26.33). 5. Why did Jesus ask the same question three times? 6. How do you think Peter felt?

PETER AND THE RISEN LORD

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1.3

LESSON John 20.1-10; 21.1-23

JOHN 20.1 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. 2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

JOHN 21.15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. MARY MAGDALENE'S DISCOVERY AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST, Jn. 20, 1, 2. A stone had been placed over the entrance of the tomb in which the body of the crucified Savior had been laid (Mk. 15.46), and the stone had been sealed (Mt. 27.66). The stone was probably a cylindrical one which could be rolled aside in a groove at the base of the opening of the tomb. Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene came to the tomb with the others, as the "we" in the next verse indicates. She found the stone removed. At once she hastened to tell Peter and John (John always refers to himself in his Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"). "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him," she cried.

"The Catholic, who cannot find the grace in these Easter days to have the stone rolled back, whether it be pride, greed, or pleasure, that keeps him tombed in his own selfishness, is certainly wasting the graces of Easter" (Catholic Standard and Times).

II. PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST, Jn. 20.3-10. The two disciples ran to the tomb. John reached there first and, looking in reverently and wonderingly where the Savior's body had rested, he beheld only the linen cloths in which it had been wrapped. Then impetuous Peter rushed into the tomb and saw a wonderful thing: the linen cloths which had enveloped Christ's body were rolled up and the napkin, which had been about his head, was in another place. Leisurely and orderly had been Christ's departure. Had others carried off his body, the grave clothes would not have been left. Then John also entered the tomb, and the sight sufficed him: he believed that Christ was risen. "A heart full of love for Christ requires but little proof to find in him a living Lord. The apostle of love was the first person to believe in the risen Christ, and he it was who afterwards recorded that beatitude which fell from the lips of his living Lord, a beatitude the blessedness of which he was the first to know and in which we all now share, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed'" (C. R. Erdman).

Until they saw proof of the fact, the disciples had not realized that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead. So different had been their conception of his kingdom, so full had been their thoughts of what they expected it to be, that they had not grasped the meaning of the Scripture nor of his own words to them about the resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ proves that the cross was not a calamity which he could not avoid, but a cup which he willingly drained; it reveals him as the Son of God; it assures us that he is not now a memory but a Living Presence; it brings life and immortality to light; it comforts us with the belief that death is not the end of the soul but the gateway through which the soul passes into its larger life.

III. CHRIST APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES IN GALILEE, Jn. 21.1-14. Five of the disciples, Peter, James, John, Thomas and Nathanael, were together by the Sea of Galilee, when Peter announced his intention of going fishing. The others decided to go with him. They toiled all night, but caught nothing. At daybreak Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not recognize him. "Have you anything to eat?" he called to them. "No," was the reply. Then said he, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find the fish." They obeyed, and were scarcely able to draw the net in, so heavily weighted was it with the catch.

John, the man of clearest vision, was the first to discern that the Stranger was the Lord, and Peter, the man of quickest impulse, at once fastened his fisherman's coat about him and swam ashore. The others followed in a small boat. On the shore they found a fire of coals on which fish were cooking, and there was a supply of bread. "Come and break your fast," was the gracious invitation which the amazed disciples heard. Then with the Risen Lord as their Host, they partook of the bread and fish.

The tremendous truth that day revealed was that Jesus is alive. The empty grave was the negative proof; the appearances were the positive proof. "It is a great thing that Jesus is a living Savior, and therefore still with us," said Edward Everett Hale; "yet thousands who confess his name do not realize it, and thousands of those who at heart believe it still do not act upon it."

IV. PETER'S NEW COMMISSION, John 21.15-17. After the disciples had broken their fast, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, son of John (notice that he does not call him Peter, Rock), lovest thou me more than these other disciples love me?" Recall Peter's boast (Mt. 26.33) that "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." No longer self-assertive, the humbled man replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

Then said Jesus, "Feed my lambs," thus telling the heartbroken Peter that he was trusted, that he would have a chance to redeem himself. A second time Jesus asked the same question, and received the same reply. "Feed my sheep," said Jesus.

When Jesus asked his question a third time, Peter was grieved and replied, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." "Lord, thou knowest everything, all I said and all I did and all I am, but this thou also knowest, that the deepest thing in my heart is my love to thee. By that love which has borne no fruit, which has failed in the hour of need, which has been mastered by fear, but which is real and is my very soul, by that let me be judged" (John Watson). "It was grief, not irritation, nor anger, nor shame. There was no pride, passion, or vanity in this, but only holy, meek contrition, a penitent, chastised spirit. The man who can so take allusions to his sins is not only fit to tend the sheep, but even to nurse the lambs. He will be tender towards offenders, not with the spurious charity which cannot afford to condemn sin strongly, but with the genuine charity of one who has himself received mercy for sins sincerely repented" (A. B. Bruce).

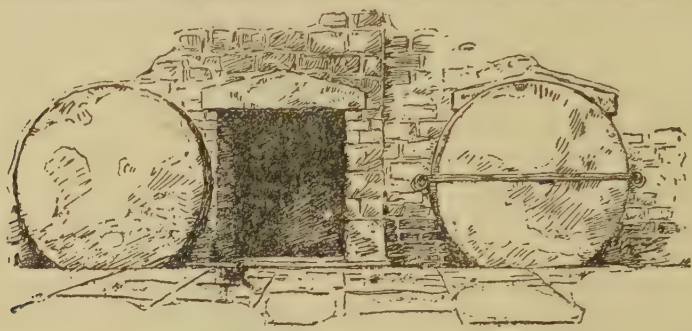
Three times Peter had denied his love, and three times he was given an opportunity to reaffirm his love and receive his commission. "Feed my sheep," said Jesus. "Peter's memory lashed him sometimes mercilessly. Could he ever forget that threefold denial and threefold absolution? Never! And what then? The horse that has once fallen very easily stumbles again! The tiger that is tamed may even more feel the old passion for blood! The snake that is charmed may yet show the force of its fangs! That is why Peter in his Epistles had so much to say about being kept, 'kept by the power of God'" (F. W. Boreham).

"As three times to this saint he saith,
He saith to me, he saith to thee,
Breathing his grace-conferring breath,
'Lovest thou me?'

Ah, Lord, I have such feeble faith,
Such feeble hope to comfort me,
But love it is, as strong as death,
And I love thee" (Christina Rossetti).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Seeth the stone taken away from the tomb, John 20.1. The door of the tomb might be rectangular and of solid stone, with a flange fitting into a socket for a hinge, both of the same material; or it might be a cylindrical stone rolling in a groove to the right or left of the opening; or there might be a regular door of stone supported by hinges against which a stone was rolled for further protection. It is not possible to say with certainty which of these methods was followed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The sealing of tombs appears to have been common throughout the East. Quite recently they have been found in Egypt, dating back to the time of the Exodus, with their seals still intact upon them.—Bissell.



A Tomb Open and One Closed

Seeth the linen cloths lying, John 20.5. We are told that Lazarus was bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. A corpse was swathed in these "grave clothes," and apparently the richer the man the more numerous the wrappings. Among the parting injunctions of a rabbi was this, "Do not multiply grave clothes upon me." In Palestine today the Mohammedans wrap their dead in this way. The tightly bound body is carried on a board resting upon the shoulders of men, and in Constantinople such "bundles" are left at the door of a mosque to await the arrival of other dead that prayers may be said over several at once.

Simon, son of John, John 21.15. We read of one of the Caliphs who gave to his principal officers an honorable surname suggested by their qualities. When he wished to show his dissatisfaction, he dropped it, calling them by their own names; this caused them great alarm. When he resumed the employment of the surname, it was a sign of their return to favor.—Archbishop Trench.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. On what occasions had Peter and John heard Jesus say that he should rise from the dead? Why did they not believe this? When Jesus called Peter to become his disciple, what did Jesus say he would make of him?

The Background of John 20.1-10. Jesus had been crucified on Friday. It was on Sunday, the first day of the week, that he rose from the dead. The scene is at the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid. A stone had been rolled against the door of the tomb. "We remember," the chief priests and Pharisees said to Pilate, "that that deceiver said while he was yet alone, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day." "Ye have a guard," answered Pilate; "go, make it as sure as ye can."

The first Easter was at the spring full moon, and in fixing the day to be kept in memory of Christ's resurrection it was thought essential that it should always be the time of the full moon of spring. Accordingly, Easter always falls on the Sunday after the full moon next after March twenty-first, the spring solstice.

The Background of John 21.1-17. During the forty days which intervened between his Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus appeared ten times to his disciples, as recorded in the Gospels and in The Acts. John tells of Christ's appearance to the

ten in the absence of Thomas, and of his appearance again to them a week later when Thomas was present and was convinced that it was the Lord. Then he records the incident on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 Peter 1.3-12.

"Paul was right when he affirmed that Christianity would stand or fall on the question of the resurrection of Jesus. This is our Verdun, and if we lose it the whole line gives way. Our pupils will inevitably feel what measure of importance the resurrection of Christ occupies in our own consciousness."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE RISEN LORD

Beginning the Lesson. When we approach the story of the Resurrection from the intellectual side, we are confronted with great difficulties; but let me remind you of Newman's axiom, that ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt. The difficulties of belief are great, but it seems to me that the difficulties of disbelief are still greater. Take the theories of the Resurrection by which reason has endeavored to reconcile itself to faith, and which is there that we can accept? Weigh well, for example, Renan's suggestion that the whole story of the Resurrection sprang from the imagination of an adoring woman; and then ask whether it is credible that the ancient world, which was a world full of thought and culture, and was bitterly opposed to Christianity, could have accepted the story upon evidence so trivial? Or weigh, again, the suggestion that Christ was not really dead, that the entombment was doubtless real, but that what seemed death was in a reality a swoon; and then ask what becomes of the fourfold circumstantial account of the death of Jesus, and what became of Jesus himself, and whether it be for an instant credible that he should wake, pass from the tomb and disappear, vanishing utterly into the crowded world, ignorant and careless of all that was being taught and done in his name? Or weigh, again, the theory that all that is meant by these idyllic resurrection stories is that there is a certain resurrection of the wise and good into an immortality of influence. But if that be all that they mean, why invent narratives full of circumstantial detail and evidence; and if you can reduce the resurrection stories into an allegory of influence, what is to prevent you, by the same process, from resolving the entire Gospels into an allegory of love?

No; these are not the paths which any candid thinker can tread. If we still read these immortal chapters and still doubt, our doubt springs from two causes, our imperfect consciousness of our own spiritual natures and our bondage to the tyranny of the senses. But if we do realize that we are living souls, that our true life is hid with Christ in God, it will no longer seem a thing incredible that Jesus carried the spiritual nature of man to its highest point of perfectibility, and that he did this not for his own sole glory but to show men the path of triumph over death, that where he is, there we may be also.—From a Sermon by W. J. Dawson.

Jesus Christ is a Living Force Today. That Jesus is a living force in the world is evident by the power which his personality is at the present day exerting. Says Harnack: "Not only in the beginning was the Word, the Word that was at once Deed and Life; but the living, resolute, indomitable Word, namely, the Person, has always been a power in history, along with and above the power of circumstance."

Whether Jesus Christ reanimated his body nineteen centuries ago, or whether he appeared to his disciples as a spirit, but so seen and realized by them that they were convinced of his continuing existence, is a question of secondary importance. The fundamental fact is that millions of men and women are today living on a higher plane and actuated by a nobler purpose because they are inspired by the spirit of him who lives in his disciples and manifests his presence by the life which he inspires in them.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in The Outlook.

God Gives Man Another Chance. God is far more merciful than man. There is a sinning woman at Jesus's feet. The Pharisees crowd around crying for her condemnation. That's man. Jesus said, "Go, and sin no more." That's God.

The thief groans upon the cross, suffering well-deserved punishment. That's man. To his cry for mercy the suffering Jesus answers, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." That's God.

Peter denies his Lord. The rest of the eleven, I fancy, had it been left to them, would have decreed his banishment from their circle. The angel told the women at the sepulcher that Jesus wanted to see the disciples and Peter. That's God.—Wilton Merle Smith.

Peter's Conversation with the Risen Lord. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" Peter once asked Jesus. "Until seven times?" he added, thinking that he was allowing for a very generous amount of forgiveness. Jesus answered: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." Well was it for Peter that he had a pardoning Lord. Last week we discussed his worst offense. Now we see how Jesus recalled that sin, and how readily and gladly he forgave his penitent disciple.

It Is Altitude that Counts. If the trend of a life is upward, toward the hilltop, then that life is a success. There may be many a fall along the way, but if the character of the life as a whole is onward and upward, the life is not failing. The Rev. Mr. J. D. Jones of England in an address illustrated the thought that one's moral character is determined by the general tenor of his life and not by occasional deviations in the direction either of good or of evil, by an explanation of the difference between weather and climate. Climate is the settled, permanent thing; weather is merely an occasional thing. Sometimes dwellers in the tropics get a touch of the arctics and sometimes those in temperate regions have a touch of the tropics. A man's fundamental and essential character is his climate. The fact that a man does good or bad deeds does not alter the fact that his fundamental character is biased either for good or for evil. Varieties of weather, but one climate; varieties of deed, but one abiding and settled character.

The Value of a Backward Look. The Master asked the disciple, "Do you love me?" As many times as the disciple had denied the Master, Christ recalled the past, burnt it in upon Peter's memory, probed his heart to the uttermost, despite the hurt of the probing. But he did it only that he might add emphasis to the instruction, "Feed my sheep." The only value of the backward look is as a preparation for a future life. It is well for us sometimes to number our days, but only "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." But when we have applied our hearts unto wisdom, when we have learned the lesson of the past, and learned it thoroughly, then we are to rise up and go about Christ's business, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."—Lyman Abbott, in The Great Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The miracle of the Resurrection. See Chapter XII of The Essence of Religion, by Borden P. Bowne. "We account the resurrection of Christ miraculous, and so it was," Dr. W. J. Dawson affirms; "but is it more miraculous than this emergence of Christ into world-wide supremacy, when we recollect how frail was the chance of his even being remembered?" he questions. "A marvel that the stone of his sepulcher was rolled away, but is it more marvelous than that the stone of silence placed upon his memory should be thrust aside? A miracle that the body came forth glorious from the grave's dishonors, but is it not an equal miracle that his spirit survived the dishonor of man's neglect, and found in these poor fragmentary scraps of recollection we call the Gospels a medium sufficient for a ministry which has touched the hearts of all races and filled the thoughts of all ages?"

2. Spiritism of today. "We have in the Gospels testimony so dignified and virile in its content, so naïve and unpremeditated in its presentation, so convincing and permanent in its reactions, that it makes the claims of modern spiritualism appear vapid and childish by contrast. The post-resurrection utterances of Jesus are no meaningless platitudes, such as we hear today in pretended communications from departed spirits. On the contrary, they constitute a distinct and advanced stage in Christ's teaching ministry, a fitting conclusion to his otherwise incomplete work."

3. Waves and tides. The noisy waves are failures, but the great, silent tide is a success. Do you know what it is to be failing every day and yet to be sure that your life is, as a whole, in its great movement and meaning, not failing but succeeding?—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What three kinds of proof did Peter give for the truth of his great theme? 2. What is Peter's argument from his quotation from David? 3. How did the presence of the Spirit's power show itself in Peter? 4. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? 5. What part does your belief play in your life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE RISEN LORD APPEARS TO PETER

Beginning the Lesson. A boy was sent by his teacher to the principal of the school for doing something wrong. After hearing the facts the principal took out a blank book and wrote down the boy's name, observing as he did so: "You have not been sent to me before. Now, I don't know you, you may be a good boy for all I know. Good boys sometimes make mistakes. Now I'll just make a note in pencil that you were sent to me today, and I will also note why you were sent. But you see I am making this memorandum in pencil, and I am not bearing on very hard. And if you are not sent to me again this year, I shall erase this from my book and no one will ever know anything about it." That man was giving the boy another chance, just as Christ after his resurrection gave Peter another chance. Why did Peter need it?

What happened between Peter's denial and the resurrection of Jesus? When Sunday morning dawned after the Crucifixion on Friday, who came to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid? What discovery did Mary Magdalene make? To whom did she hasten with the news? What did John do? What did Peter do? What did Peter see? What did this tell him? Then what did John do, and what effect did the sight have upon him? Why?

Peter and John Running to the Tomb

Jesus had risen as he said he would. He appeared several times after his resurrection. As there is not time to talk about all his appearances, we must limit ourselves to the time when he appeared to five of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee.

Peter Is Given Another Chance. By the Sea of Galilee Peter had received his call to be a follower of Jesus, and by the Sea amid the old familiar surroundings he was restored to his office as disciple and apostle after his great denial.

The meeting was quite a surprise. The disciples never knew where and when the Risen Christ might be found. Mary met him in the garden: his disciples met him on a hill; he had appeared to them in the Upper Room, and now he appeared at dawn where the waves broke on the shore. The disciples had had a disappointing night; they had been fishing without success. How overjoyed they must have been to see Christ awaiting them on the shore!

The incident is full of beautiful touches. It would have been no surprise if Jesus had said to Peter: "Are you sorry and ashamed? Will you serve me faithfully in the future? Are you prepared to do something to atone for the past?" But all Jesus asked was, "Do you love me?" He wanted to be sure of Peter's devotion to himself, and he wanted Peter to be sure of it, too. He had work for him to do, but first of all he must be convinced of his erring disciple's love.

That is what Jesus says to all who want to be his fellow-workers. Rather than "Have you the brains?" or "Have you the education?" the question is, "Have you the heart?" Why? Because love makes us willing and eager, love kindles and inspires, love gives winsomeness and skill, love is the true motive of service. Work that has not love behind and in it, is never of much use to man or God.

Three times Jesus asked that question of Peter. And each time Peter answered it, Jesus said, "Feed my sheep—Feed my lambs." If you love me, go and do something for me, look after the people that belong to me. Some of them are young and weak, and therefore I call them my lambs; some of them are grown up, and I call them my sheep; and all of them have their faults. Guard them, see that they get the things which will make them strong and faithful.

Jesus had a different idea of love from that which some of you have. Some of you think that you love your mother, but when she doesn't let you have your own way you scowl and sulk, perhaps, and when she wants something done you have a hundred excuses for not doing it, perhaps. That is not Christ's thought of love. To him love is something which is eager to do and give and sacrifice. So he says, If you want me to believe that you love me, show it by serving me. When I see you forgetting yourself to serve me, then I shall know that you love me. Service may not mean love, but true love always means service.

Peter Becomes a Loyal Follower of his Master. "Have you ever thought why it is, that God leaves so large a part of the human race still in the darkness of heathenism?" questions Kanzo Uchimura. And then he answers, "I think it is that your Christianity may live and grow by your efforts to diminish this darkness." Certainly this was the way in which Christ caused Peter's Christianity to grow. He forgave Peter his sin of denial, he restored him to his place among the apostles, and he gave him his commission. In feeding and tending Christ's lambs and sheep he became a whole-hearted, self-sacrificing shepherd; there was never any doubt after this about his loyalty to his Master.

God Gives Us Another Chance. "It's two years since I joined the church," the young man said, and his tone was dull and spiritless as if he were speaking something too remote to interest him. "I was in earnest then, and I've tried, but it seems of no use. I guess I don't belong in the church. You know how it is, Mr. Rutledge, when a man holds an office he isn't fit for. It's better to resign than to wait till he's kicked out."

"I hope it isn't so bad as that, Tom." The elderly face was kindly. "What you've said about yourself reminds me of an experience I had when I was sixteen or seventeen years old. My father owned a small farm, but he was a poor man, and if I was to go on with my schooling I had to earn something for myself. I shall never forget the humiliation of the first summer I tried to work out. I wasn't ashamed to work, but I was ashamed of being a flat failure wherever I went. I think I was discharged eight times that season for sheer incompetence. I had always been fond of books and had never taken a sympathetic interest in farm work, and strangers wouldn't put up with my slack, bungling way of doing things.

"Father was always kind and patient when I came home. He never scolded me for losing my place, but pointed out the reasons why I was not a good farmer; he blamed himself as much as he blamed me. It was because of his encouragement that I tried again and again, and when it seemed useless to try any more he proposed that we take land the next year and work together. 'I guess your father can get along with you all right, Robert, even if the neighbors don't think you're much of a hired man,' he said in his homely way.

"I suppose I was poor help to the end of the chapter, but I was working for my father, and his love overlooked the things I did amiss; he knew I was doing my poor best."

The old eyes were wonderfully tender and wistful as they met the younger eyes looking into them inquiringly. "Isn't it the same with our Heavenly Father, Tom? You didn't hire out to a hard master two years ago, Tom. You just took your place in God's big family, where God wanted you to be, where he wants you to stay. Hired men are discharged every day for incompetency, but it's rare for a son to be kicked out. That's against the nature of things, because the son belongs in his father's house."

The young man's eyes had softened. His lips moved unsteadily before the words came. "I want to stay if—if he—if he feels that way," he said brokenly.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermon.

If Christ the Lord should come today,
As erst to Peter by the sea,
And low and tenderly should say
"O, my disciple, lovest thou me?"
To thee and me—
What would our answer be?—Margaret E. Sangster.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the word *Pentecost* mean, and what did it celebrate? 2. Was Peter expecting to preach a sermon on Pentecost? 3. How did it come about? 4. What happened before he spoke? 5. What does "pricked in their heart," verse 37, mean?

PETER AT PENTECOST

GOLDEN TEXT: Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2.38

LESSON Acts 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.5-11

ACTS 2.12 And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST, verses 1-4. Before he left his disciples, Jesus gave them a great commission. They were to convince others that he is the Son of God, that he lived and taught as only they could fully testify, that he willingly suffered death on the cross for the salvation of the world, and that he had arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven. "Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection" was a truth which the world would not readily accept. Only through power given them on high could these men accomplish their great task.

On the Day of Pentecost that power came. There was a sound as of wind and an appearance as of fire-symbols of the Holy Spirit. The disciples found themselves praising God in words that sounded strange to them. The important fact was that they then realized that the Spirit of God had come into their hearts, that he was to abide with them as their Strengthener and Helper, to inspire and guide them in the work of making the Christ known to the ends of the earth.

"The Holy Spirit is just God making man understand him, God making himself intelligible to men, God speaking to each kind of man in his own tongue" (John Kelman).

II. THE EFFECT UPON THE OBSERVERS, verses 5-13. A great multitude gathered and were amazed and perplexed at what they heard. "Behold," they marveled, "are not all these that speak Galileans? And how hear we, every man in our own language?"

"From this familiar passage we learn several things about spiritual enthusiasm. To begin with, it is a power which breaks down the barriers of race and caste. In the superficial aspects of our life we are widely separate, but when the profounder depths of our nature are really stirred we find that conventional distinctions and demarcations count for very little. Men from infinitely diverse parts of the world discover that they speak a common language" (R. H. Coats).

While some questioned, "What meaneth this?" others mockingly declared, "They are filled with new wine." "These are not drunken," was Peter's retort, "seeing

it is but the third hour of the day," nine o'clock, and no man would be seen drunk at that early hour.

III. PETER'S SERMON, verses 14-36. Seven weeks before Pentecost Peter had been afraid to admit to a maidservant that he was one of Jesus's disciples, but now when "filled with the Spirit," he boldly stood up and proclaimed to the great crowd of Jews of Jerusalem and Jews from distant lands that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world; moreover, he did not hesitate to charge them with the sin of having crucified the Christ. The Spirit's power had utterly changed the craven denier of Christ, and had given him a wonderful insight into the meaning of the life of his Lord. Before Pentecost he could not have so interpreted Jesus and so won followers for him.

Standing up with the eleven (Judas was gone, but Matthias had been selected to fill his place), Peter exclaimed, "Ye men . . . give ear unto my words." He was speaking to Jews, and his first object was to prove that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and expectations in regard to the Messiah, so he first told them (verses 15-21) that the events of Pentecost which so amazed them were but the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2.28-32), that at the coming of the Messiah God's Spirit would be poured forth, and old and young, men and women, bond and free, would see visions and speak divine truths.

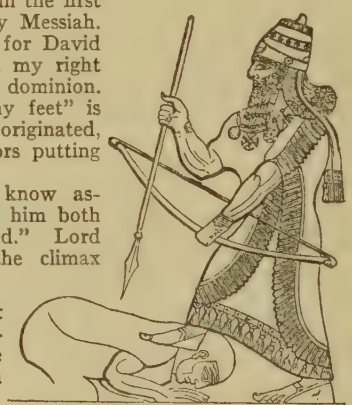
Then Peter took up his great theme that Jesus is the Christ, and gave three proofs. First, there were the miracles which his hearers themselves had witnessed. Second, there was the resurrection, of which they all were witnesses. God had raised Jesus from the dead to higher life and wider power. Third, there was the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit there at Pentecost, which they had now seen and heard. Jesus still lived and cared for his followers, for it was he who had sent the Spirit.

Furthermore, the resurrection and exaltation fulfilled another prophecy of David, as given in Psalm 110.1:—

> The Lord said unto my Lord,
> Sit thou on my right hand,
> Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Two different Hebrew words for *Lord* are used in the first line, and the meaning is, Jehovah said unto my Messiah. David could not have been speaking of himself for David did not ascend into the heavens. "Sit thou on my right hand" means, Be partaker of the divine glory and dominion. "Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" is an expression denoting complete victory, and originated, no doubt, from the ancient custom of conquerors putting their feet on their enemies' necks.

"Let all the household of Israel therefore know assuredly," Peter concluded, "that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Lord and Christ, Sovereign and Messiah—this is the climax of Peter's sermon.



Assyrian King with Foot on the Neck of an Enemy

"This sermon would have had no effect without an application. No more will sermons now. The sermon had results because there was one little word of two letters in the application: That word is 'ye' "

(Frank W. Warne).

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON, verses 37-41. Power is always associated in our minds with Pentecost. It was new power which Peter showed that day when he offered Jesus to that multitude and gathered them into the fellowship of Christ. His words, especially the appeal to prophecy, were convincing to the Jews, and the home-thrust at their consciences—"whom ye crucified"—pricked their hearts, convinced them of their sin. "Brethren, what shall we do?" they cried. How can we be freed from our guilt? "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you," was Peter's answer. They must not only repent of their sins, but they must change their views in regard to Jesus; the One whom they had regarded as a false Christ they must accept as the true Christ; they would acknowledge this by being baptized

in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Jowett explains Peter's word thus:

"First, there is repentance. And repentance is not a flow of emotion, but a certain direction of mind. I may repent with dry eyes. It is not a matter of feeling, but of willing. It is to lay hold of the aimless, drifting thought, and steer it toward God! It is a change of mind. Second, there is a definite and avowed choice of my new Goal, my new Lord and King. The Christian life cannot be a subterfuge. It cannot be lived incognito. There must be confession, a bold and clarion-like avowal that henceforth I am a soldier of the Lord. And the spiritual experiences will be sure, as sure as the law-governed processes of the material world. There will be remission of sins. The old guilt will fall away from my soul as the chains fell from Peter's limbs when the angel touched them. And there will be the gift of the Holy Spirit. A new dynamic is mine! I enter into fellowship with the power of the ascended Lord."

"For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." "To all that are afar off" may refer to the Gentiles, for it is an expression often used for Gentiles in both the Old and the New Testaments. If so, Peter at this time, of course, thought of the promise as being to the Gentiles only in case they became Jewish proselytes. And with many other words Peter exhorted them to save themselves from sharing the guilt and fate of their perverse generation.

About three thousand believed Peter's words and were baptized that day. It has been pointed out that "that day," according to Biblical usage, need not necessarily mean the day of Pentecost, but may rather mean "that period," the first epoch in the life of the church. This interpretation has been adopted by many on account of the seeming impossibility of three thousand persons being baptized in one day in Jerusalem, where water was not abundant. But there were numerous pools encircling the city, and the habits of the East would not prevent these public reservoirs being used for this purpose.

"You all believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the only Savior of men. I ask you as individuals, what will you do with Jesus the Christ? Peter's audience from that time became workers for Christ. Will you today, tomorrow, and for the rest of your life work to bring others to Christ, and be an out-and-out disciple of Christ? Peter's audience made religion of first importance. You cannot succeed as a Christian until you make religion the thing you live for, resolve and say, 'Whatever else I may and may not be, a Christian I will be'" (Frank W. Warne).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Like as of fire, verse 3. That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested himself to Moses, when he appointed him to deliver Israel, Ex. 3.2, 3, and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the law on Mount Sinai, Ex. 19.16-20. The Jews, in order to support the pretenses of their rabbis as delivering their instructions by divine authority and influence, represent them as being surrounded by fire while they were delivering their lectures; and their words, in consequence, as penetrating and exhilarating the souls of their disciples. Some of the Mohammedans represent divine inspiration in the same way. Nor was this notion of the manner in which divine intimations were given, peculiar to the Jews and Arabs; it exists in all countries; and the glories which appear round the heads of Chinese, Hindu, and Christian saints were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that his Spirit, under the emblem of fire, sat upon them and became resident in them. The Greeks and Romans had similar notions of the way in which divine communications were given. Everything of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai, for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world.—Adam Clarke.

Parthians . . . Arabians, verses 9-11. Just as today all the Mohammedan world journeys to Mecca, and as Mohammedans, Jews and Christians alike throng Jerusalem at Easter, so in those days, in the words of Philo, "many thousands from many thousands of cities streamed at every feast towards the temple." The Jew

who could by any manner of means stand the expense, no matter in how distant a quarter of the Roman world he lived, went annually on a pilgrimage to the temple at Jerusalem, and every Jew of full age in other cities paid a tax of two drachmæ for its maintenance.

Into the heavens, verse 34. The Jews were wont to speak of a number of "heavens," or realms above the earth. According to Rabbi Abia, there were six antechambers, as it were, or steps, to the seventh heaven, where God himself dwelt. There are several references in the Scriptures to "the third heaven"; the first heaven was held to be the firmament; the second the region of the stars; the third, the throne of God.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUUD

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In Peter's last talk with Jesus, what did Jesus bid him do? Of what did Jesus's threefold repetition remind Peter? Contrast the Peter of our lesson two weeks ago with the Peter in today's lesson.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit's Coming. There were forty days between the resurrection and ascension. Just before he was parted from them, Jesus bade his disciples wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit's coming "not many days hence." The purpose of the promised blessing was to fit them to be witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when Jesus had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Ten days intervened between the ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The Traditional Upper Room

Pentecost. The feast of Pentecost was one of the three great national festivals at which all male Jews were expected to present themselves in the temple at Jerusalem. The feast commemorated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. *Pentecost* is a Greek word meaning fiftieth: it came fifty days after the Passover. In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks (Dt. 16.8, 10), because a week of weeks (seven weeks) came between it and the first day of the Passover; the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23.16), because it was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest (Dt. 26.5-10); and the Day of the First-fruits (Lev. 23.17-21), because of the offering made.

The Place. The place of meeting was probably the Upper Room of the house in Jerusalem which was headquarters for the disciples. When the crowd gathered they probably assembled in the courtyard, and there Peter delivered his sermon.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Note that Peter began his sermon by securing attention, and he secured it by re-

calling to his hearers' minds something which they themselves knew—the mighty works and wonders which God through Jesus had wrought in their midst.

Note that Peter had one definite aim in his talk, and that he led up to it skilfully. He hit as well as aimed.

Note that there was no action on the part of his hearers until he made an application of the truth to their lives. Then they were pricked in their hearts and asked, "What shall we do?"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

Beginning the Lesson. Time was when each house had no water in it except as that water was brought into it in a bucket with much labor and weariness by some member of the household. Recently I drove around a great reservoir from which a great city is supplied with its water. It is supported by a magnificent structure of concrete and mortar, a splendid power house with engines driving. It was an epoch in the life of that city, introducing a totally new era, when the city built its reservoir, laid its mains, ran its connecting pipes into the various houses, so that now every member of any household has all the water he needs just for the turning of a tap.

So there was a time when God sought to rule his people by his law written in a book, and by the machines of a government empowered from above. But upon Pentecost a new era began. That day was epoch-making in the history of God's dealing with man. Upon it he began to communicate his own divine nature to man, to write his law upon the human heart and rule from within. Here was a cataclysmic upheaval which overturned the whole system of Jewish, or legal, and ceremonial religion, and shook the very foundations of the Roman Empire. From Pentecost forward it became increasingly impossible for imperialistic government to continue to shackle the souls of men in a political slavery. Upon that day the great surging tide of divine life swept into the life of those who were ready to receive and inaugurate a new dispensation of life and power and liberty.—J. C. Massee, in the Ten Greatest Chapters of the Bible.

He Shall Testify of Me, and ye Shall Bear Witness. Thus runs the Savior's prophetic commentary on the miracle of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, whose coming was contingent on his departure, should testify to men of his reality, and they in turn should transmit the testimony to the world. Nor does the original fulfilment of this word by any means exhaust its significance, for it describes the twofold attitude of reception and reflection which must in all ages characterize the lives of those who are truly Christ's. Their preparation both of heart and message is to be the work of the Divine Spirit. But the responsibility both of attention and obedience is their own!

Heart-attention to the Spirit's insistent testimony of Christ is the open secret of strength. Take as example General Gordon, whose witness to the Savior was always unwavering in its faithfulness, and is still a quickening and stimulating memory to lesser men. The secret of the power and effectiveness with which his life stated the case for Christ before the world was his fidelity in waiting for the daily teaching of the Spirit concerning him. No words of all those that have been penned concerning him so clearly indicate the real man as those which tell that—

> This man was not great by gold or royal state,
> By sharp sword, or knowledge of earth's wonder;
> But, more than all his race, he saw life face to face,
> And heard the Still Small Voice above its thunder.
> —J. Stuart Holden, in the Preëminent Lord.

The Power Is in the Indwelling Spirit. Men have felt that the outpouring of God's Spirit upon a community has too frequently implied a great and extraordinary movement—one which is out of the ordinary; unnatural, exceptional, commanding—when the presence of God's Spirit should be the natural expression of his indwelling power, that we may accomplish the ordinary tasks of life with faithful regularity and simplicity. God does not require exceptional gifts to do his work well. Many a man who has been unconscious of gifts has been used of God in the hastening of his Kingdom. Ten thousand men had brighter prospects and more brilliant training than Bunyan in the Bedford jail. Spurgeon and Moody were not youths of such

remarkable promise. It is not so much what a man is without the Spirit of God that counts, but what a man becomes when the Spirit of God abides within him, and God, with his power, uses man as his medium.—John Timothy Stone, in Places of Quiet Strength.

The Source of Spiritual Power. How does a modern Christian conceive God? As you stand before me, I realize there are two distinct parts to you. There is the physical body which I see and touch. It is the most obvious thing about you. But, after all, there is more to you than a body. Permeating every part of your physical organism there is something else, vastly more important. It is unseen, to be sure, but it is indubitably real. Your spirit, soul, personality, life,—call it what you will! I cannot localize this second element anywhere in your body: I can only say it permeates every part of you. I find it working through your hands and your mind to create material objects. I hear it revealing its desires through the words you speak. I see it slowly and persistently displaying its own inner nature in the kind of life it impels you to live. Invisible and intangible but how real!

So a World Personality, a Creative Intelligence, permeates the universe just as your tiny personality permeates your little body. We cannot localize this Spirit-of-the-Universe, but day by day we can see this Spirit-of-the-Universe active about us, working through the forces of the natural world to create material things; speaking to us through beauty and inner ideals, through the appeal of the prophet or the cry of suffering humanity; revealing his own ultimate purpose and nature in the kind of world which he is slowly creating before the eyes of the generations.

This is what a modern Christian believes about God. God is no strange, erratic being, localized in some isolated and sacred spot, working occasional wonders in the physical universe for the benefit of a few favorites. Far from it! He is the Spirit permeating all life, working in us and through us and beyond us, to guide and control an ever-evolving world.

Sources of surplus power? You have only begun to draw upon them when you utilize what lies within your human self. Beyond your human resources lie the resources of God, as the harbors and inlets merge silently and secretly, somewhere, into the great deep.

How can you draw help from God? This is the ultimate question in religion, and Jesus gave a very daring answer. If you want God's help, all you have to do is start living at your best, and ask for it! Instantly God responds,—no matter who you are, where you are, what you have been in the past, or what you need for the future. "Everyone that asketh receiveth, everyone that seeketh, findeth, to everyone that knocketh it shall be opened." Have you enough confidence in Jesus to believe him on that point? If you have, everything in your life will begin to change. You will begin to pray, to draw on your own hidden powers, and beyond them on the resources of the Spirit of life itself.—Condensed from an address in the Record of Christian Work, by James Gordon Gilkey.

Prayer Brings Power. Before Pentecost Peter and the other apostles and disciples had all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, Acts 1.14. And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all together in one place. Back of the great ingathering of disciples on the day of Pentecost were the many days of long-continued, earnest prayer.

Prayer was the source of another great sermon which led multitudes to accept Christ. G. H. Morgan, in Modern Knights-Errant, explains the source of power at a great Welsh revival:—

A minister who was marvelously successful in his preaching had but one sermon, but through it hundreds of men were saved. Far away from where he lived in a lonely valley, news of this wonderful success reached a brother preacher. Forthwith he became anxious to find out the secret of this success. He started out, and walked the long and weary road, and, at length, reaching the humble cottage where the good minister lived, he said, "Brother, where did you get that sermon?" He was taken into a poorly furnished room, and pointed to a spot where the carpet was worn shabby and bare, near a window that looked out towards the solemn mountains, and the minister said, "Brother, that is where I got that sermon. My heart was heavy for men. One evening I knelt there, and cried for power to preach as I had never preached before. The hours passed until midnight struck, and the stars looked down on a sleeping valley, and the silent hills; but the answer came not, so I prayed on until at length I saw a faint gray shoot up in the east; presently it became silver, and I watched and prayed until the silver became purple and gold, and on all

the mountain crests blazed the altar fires of the new day; and then the sermon came, and the power came, and I lay down and slept, and arose and preached and scores fell down before the fire of God; that is where I got that sermon."

I Can Do All Things through Christ who Strengtheneth me. At an agricultural school in one of our Western States one of the professors recently made some interesting experiments with a growing squash. He fitted a harness of strap iron over the squash in such a way that, as the vegetable grew, the expanding iron harness would register the strength that the squash exerted upon it. Thus harnessed the young squash lifted at different stages of its growth weights of sixty, five hundred, eleven hundred, and eventually of three thousand pounds. And all this marvelous power was made possible through just one thing—the connection of the squash with the vine.

One of the most amazing things in life is the power for burden-bearing that apparently weak and almost helpless men and women often manifest. In every path of life we find them, staggering on their way under heavy loads of business trouble, sickness, physical pain and misfortune. We marvel that they do not go down beneath their loads. Instead they accept them with patience and cheerfulness; day after day they fare courageously onward.

There is an explanation. If the secret of the inner life of these people could be known, the explanation of their strength would be found in just one thing—connection with the Vine. They are in constant contact with him who said, "I am the true vine." "I can do all things," wrote the great Apostle, "through Christ who strengtheneth me."—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. How far has the experience of Pentecost been repeated?

2. The Pentecostal Sect.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the connection between religion and philanthropy? 2. What gifts have come to you that have been better than silver and gold? 3. What is a better gift for beggars and the afflicted than money? 4. Do you know anyone who, though he has empty pockets, yet has true wealth?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PETER AT PENTECOST

Beginning the Lesson. General Stanley Maude was the general in the Great War who surmounted great obstacles, saved the campaign in Mesopotamia from disaster, and captured Bagdad. When he lay dying of cholera he roused himself long enough to say to his secretary, "Tell them I can't come to the office today. They must just 'carry on.'"

Such an order came to Peter and the other disciples after the resurrection of their Great Commander, and in The Acts we see them "carrying on." What special message had Peter received? How did he receive power for his task?

How the Power Came. Barrie has a fable in one of his books about a baby lark who wanted to learn how to fly. It asked its mother to teach it. "The mother thought hard about how she herself had learned to fly long ago, last year, but all she could recall was that you suddenly do it. 'Wait till the sun comes out after the rain,' she said, half remembering. The rain came and glued the bird's wings together. 'I shall never be able to fly nor to sing,' it wailed. Then of a sudden it had to blink its eyes, for the glorious light had spread over the world. The baby-bird's breast swelled, it did not know why, and it fluttered from the ground, it did not know how. 'The sun has come out after the rain,' it trilled. 'Thank you, sun, thank you,' and floated upward crying, 'Thank you.'"

Suddenly in the fullness of time the Holy Spirit descended on Peter and the other disciples. They were filled with the Spirit. The promised power had come. The sun broke upon them and all things became new.—Sunday School Chronicle.

The Holy Spirit is the Influence of God. The sun itself is too bright for us to look at, but we like to feel the warmth of its beams. Even if we had our eyes shut we should know that the sun was shining, because we should feel its warmth. The sun is far away, millions of miles from the earth, but we feel its influence. Something comes from the sun to us which makes us warm; something comes from the sun to seeds and plants which draws them out of the earth and makes them bud and blossom. It is the influence of the sun.

If there were a sweet rose in a vase beside you, you would know that it was there, even if you shut your eyes. By its fragrance you may know and recognize it even with closed eyes. It is the influence of the rose.

There are many rivers which turn wheels, work mills, give the power for electric light, cleanse and refresh everything they touch. We do not see all the river at once, only a little bit of it. But we know that there is more of it than we can see, because of the work which it does. We know that the power to do all this work must come from somewhere, and just as the sunshine is a part of the sun itself, and the fragrance is a part of the rose, so the flowing river which we see is a part of the great river which we do not see.

So the Holy Spirit is the influence of God. He comes from God and yet is one with God himself, as the sunshine is one with the sun, and the fragrance is one with the flower, and the flowing river is one with the great river.

When we see a boy or a girl with a heart full of love and generosity and unselfishness—so full that it flows over with kind words and deeds—when we see that strong, gentle influence leading him or her to do right, we know that God's Holy Spirit—God's holy influence—is in the heart of that boy or girl. Though we cannot see or touch him, we can feel and recognize the Spirit's love and sweetness and power. And when we feel a desire to do the right, a wish to do a kind act, or to say a kind word, we may know that it is God's Holy Spirit in our heart which is prompting this. That is his work—the mission of the Holy Spirit—to send joy and love and goodness into every heart, and make it like the heart of God.—Condensed from an Article in The Sunday School Chronicle, by Grace Winter.

The Holy Spirit's Guidance. When Juliana, the daughter of the Queen of the Netherlands, was a small child, she was walking with her nurse one day when she came upon some children who were fighting. She rushed toward them intent upon joining in, when her horrified nurse exclaimed, "What would your mother, the Queen, think of you?" "No, I don't think she would like it," answered Juliana, and she went quietly away with her companion. You have been away from home. Has not the thought of your mother stopped you sometimes, when you were about to do something wrong?

"Perhaps some one of you has a mother in heaven," writes Grace Winter. "Do you not feel that she is still somewhere, though you cannot see her, and that you must not do wrong because she will be grieved? That is your mother's gentle influence dwelling in your heart, and it is strong enough to keep you from sin. The Holy Spirit is God's holy influence, whom God will send to dwell in our hearts, and who will keep us from sin."

The Holy Spirit can dwell in our hearts at once. Is that strange? When you feel your mother's influence, whether she is only a few miles away or whether she has left you and gone to heaven, your brothers and sisters can also feel that influence at the same time, can they not? Her influence can dwell in the hearts of all the family at the same time. And so God's holy influence can dwell in many hearts at the same time. He can make us all loving and wise and strong and brave, as he made those disciples. They were timid and foolish and weak often before he came to them, but he changed their nature, and he will change ours too, if we will let him take possession of our hearts. Let us ask God to send his holy influence into our hearts to dwell with us.

Sentence Sermons. The Holy Spirit is our indwelling Partner.—J. H. Jowett.

The Holy Spirit is God at work.—D. L. Moody.

Christ is with us himself, that is, he is with us by his Spirit.—Henry Drummond.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus do for a man who couldn't walk, as told in Jn. 5.1-9? 2. How can we help without money? 3. What gifts are more valuable than money? 4. What opportunities did you find last week to give gifts better than silver and gold? 5. Will you make more opportunities this coming week? 6. To whom did Peter ascribe the cure of the lame man? 7. To whom did Peter speak the words of 4.8-10? 8. What happened to him after his bold speech?

PETER HEALS THE LAME MAN

GOLDEN TEXT: In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved. Acts 4.12

LESSON Acts 3.1 to 4.31 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35.1-6

ACTS 3.1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. 2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. 8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

ACTS 4.8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, 9 if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; 10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER HEALS A LAME MAN, Acts 3.1-10. Nine in the morning and three in the afternoon were the hours for sacrifice and prayer. It was the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, when Peter and John, the two apostles so often mentioned together in the Gospel narratives, went to the temple to pray. They observed the hours of prayer in the temple, for the only difference between the followers of Christ and other Jews was that they believed Jesus to be the Messiah. The realization that Christianity was meant to replace Judaism came to them very gradually.

There was always a place in the lives of the apostles for communion with God. Prayer had an "hour," a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master had his hours of prayer. Have we?

At the temple door which was called Beautiful they saw a man sitting and begging alms of all who passed. He had been lame from birth, and was daily carried to the same spot to beg. Every one in Jerusalem must have known him well. "He was part of the city landscape, the people knew him as they knew the carved columns of the temple doorway."

There is a close connection between religion and philanthropy. Church goers are the great givers. Love of God finds expression in love to man.

The man was not expecting alms from every worshiper, and probably glanced indifferently at Peter and John. To rivet his attention upon them and arouse his expectations, Peter said to him, "Look on us." And the beggar gave heed to them. Then said Peter, "Silver and gold have I none."

He is the poor man who can say, "Only silver and gold have I."

"But what I have, that give I to thee," added Peter. You remember the story told by Turgenieff of the Russian who put his hands in his pockets and found nothing there, and then said to the beggar before him, "I am sorry, brother; I have nothing with me, brother." And the beggar, touched by the word brother, said, "That, too, was a gift, brother."

"One smile may glorify a day,
One word new hope impart;
The least disciple need not say
There are no alms to give away
If love be in the heart" (Phœbe Cary).

"In the name (in the power) of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." "Was this some new-discovered quality and power in himself?" Phillips Brooks questions, and then he thinks of Peter as saying: "This is come to me since I had to do with Jesus. It is since I was his disciple that this new power began to stir within me." And then he must have said: "It is the same which stirred in him. Do I not remember how I used to see the same in his face which now is in myself? He, too, was full of pity, and loved life, and counted the loss or the defeat of life a woe, and tried to give his own life to others." And then all was clear to Peter. All this was in him because he belonged to Jesus. The desire and power to heal was Jesus's, not his. Jesus was the spring and fountain out of which the divine water flowed. He himself was only the channel down which it flowed.

"In the name of Christ the most amazing miracles are still performed. For Christ is a living and present Power. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth the morally blind still see, the morally palsied are strengthened, the morally leprous are cleansed, the morally dead are raised into newness of life. This is the only Power that can meet the world's bitter need. There is none other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved."

Peter then took the man by the right hand and raised him up. That was the secret of the miracle. "It was human sympathy and human helpfulness coöperating with divine grace. The power of God just then was operating through Peter's strong right arm."

"Men will never be lifted up without such sympathy and help; and sympathy and help are never really effective until they are expressed in practical ways. The Christian is the man of the outstretched hand" (William E. Gilroy).

And immediately (this is one of Luke's favorite words) his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. "The Greek words here for 'ankle-bones' are those that a doctor would use in describing a patient, and make one of those minute proofs that Luke the physician was the author of The Acts." And the man leaped up and began to walk and entered the temple with them, all the time leaping and praising God.

"The signs that follow the missionary today have just as much evidence of a divine presence and of divine forces at work with him as those seen by the early church. When we hear of some bitter Moslem turning to worship the Son of God, or some proud Brahmin counting all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, or some poor pagan cleansed from loathsome vice and superstition, are we not face to face with facts which are just as truly 'signs and wonders' as those which were wrought in apostolic times? And they can easily be explained in the same way" (H. E. Fox).

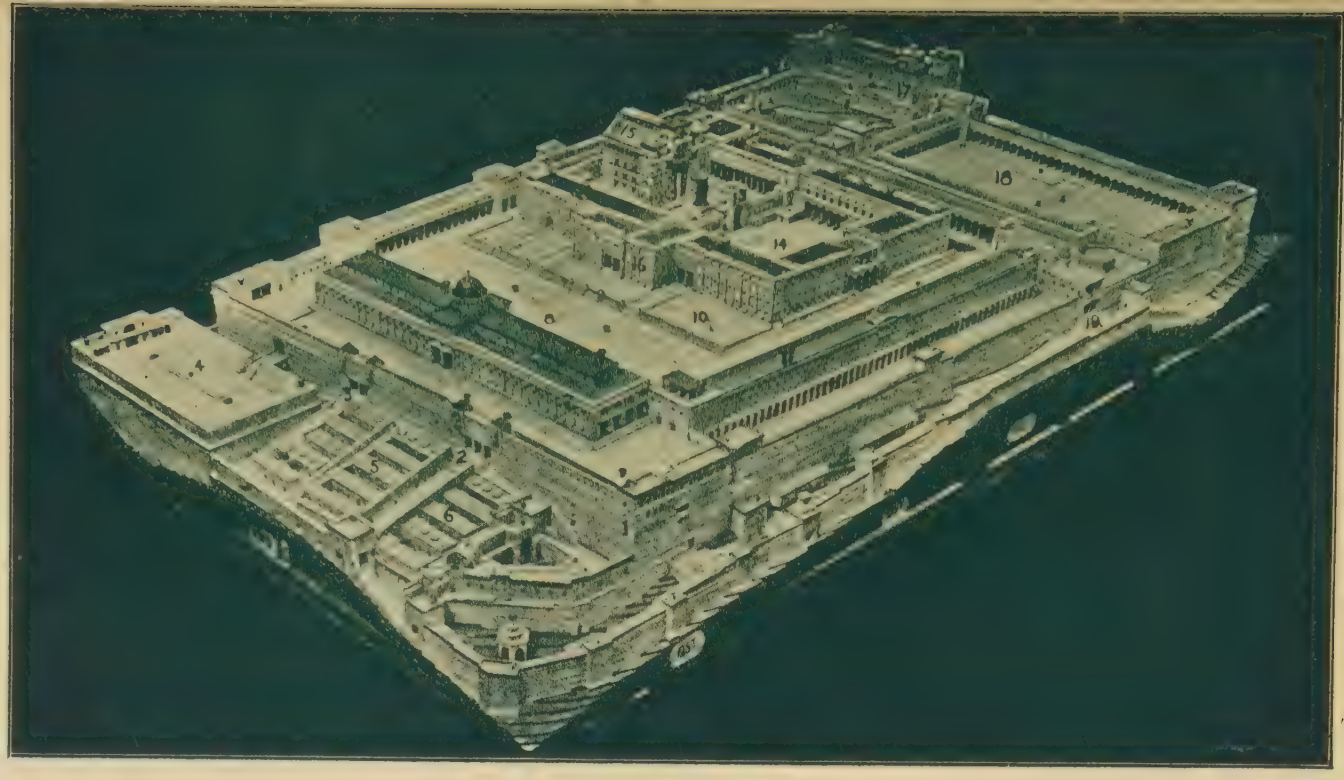
II. PETER ASCRIBES THE CURE TO CHRIST, verses 11-16. An amazed crowd quickly gathered in Solomon's Porch, and Peter hastened to tell them that it was not by his own power that he had wrought this marvel, but through faith in the Prince of life the man had been made strong.

"God's work can only be done in and by God's strength; therefore, work done well will not be our work, but God working in us" (Andrew Murray).

III. PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED, 3.17 to 4.4. Peter's discourse which followed led so many to believe, that the number of believers was increased to five thousand. The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came and arrested Peter and John because they proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Because it was evening and too late for a trial, they put the apostles in prison for the night.

IV. PETER'S BOLDNESS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN, 4.5-12. The next day the Sanhedrin sat in session, that great Jewish tribunal which was supreme upon all matters affecting the Jewish law, the sentence of death being the only penalty which they might not inflict. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought a Prisoner, Alexander and other great officials were present. The members sat in a semicircle and before them stood the prisoners, Peter and John, and the healed man also, as a kind of accessory to the deed.

"By what power or in what name have ye done this?" they questioned. Before coming to Peter's answer it is interesting to recall two earlier scenes in Peter's life



THE TEMPLE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

The temple and its courts occupied a plateau formed by building a wall (Fig. 1) around the summit of Mt. Moriah. The parts were as follows: 7, Herod's Porch; 8, the Gentile Court; 9, Wall of Partition (Ephesians 2:14), no Gentile could go beyond this point; 10, Court of Israel. Jesus drove the dove-hawkers from 10 to 8; 11, Solomon's Porch; 12, the Gate Beautiful; here Peter and John found the lame beggar and here Paul was arrested and taken to 17, the Tower of Antonio; 14, Court of the Women and Treasury; 13, the Gate Nicanor; 15, the central structure which contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Hall of Judgment and the King's Palace occupied the position of 5, 6 and 7.

as Dr. Jowett recalls them. "Here is Peter, a man who had been plastic to circumstances, a man who had received always the impress of the immediate hour, a man of fickle moods and varying whims and caprices, a man of impulse but little constancy, usually choosing the line of least resistance. Take two glimpses of this weak and impulsive man. Well, here is the Master foretelling the coming gloom and desolation and crucifixion and death. Here is the Master foretelling the chilly approach of an appalling night. And Peter said unto him, 'This shall not be unto thee, Lord. Choose an easier way. Take a more prosperous path to thy Kingdom. See thy crown by a more comfortable road. This shall not be unto thee.' And the Lord looked at Peter and said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' The spirit of Peter shrank and recoiled from the chilling touch of sacrifice and right. I wonder how this man will fare when he comes face to face with antagonism. Here is another glimpse of Peter. The shadows have fallen, the night has come. The Master is to be tried at the dawn. In the outer court a fire is burning, and Peter stands tremblingly by to warm himself. And suddenly a servant maid standing there caught a sight of the face of Peter in the transient glare of the fire and immediately said, 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.' And quickly and untrembling Peter replied: 'Woman, I know not the man. I have never known him.' I wonder how the man will fare when he comes face to face with the powerful, threatening resistance of official religion."

Then Peter, we read, filled with the Holy Spirit, answered: "Ye rulers of the people (chief priests) and elders (representatives of the Sanhedrin), if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole (if we are forced like criminals to defend ourselves for doing good) be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand before you whole." Thus boldly Peter accused them of having crucified the Christ. "He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner," continued Peter. See Ps. 118.22 and Mt. 22.42-44. (The stone made the head of the corner is the stone at the angle of two walls which supports and unites them. Had the arch been in common use the figure of the keystone would probably have been employed instead.) "For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

"There is great and peculiar need of this apostolic boldness today. The times imperatively demand the military attitude in the soul. The Christian character must be conspicuous for strength, intelligence, decision, attack. Whatever may be allowed to lie in obscurity, or hidden away in secret and mystical depths, the masculinity of Christian discipleship must stand out in bold and flowing relief. How do we stand in the matter? Can we say that the great characteristic of our modern discipleship is its boldness, and that by the very vim and pulse of our living we arrest the world in wonder? I must express my fear that we are creating vast numbers of pulpy Christians who are destitute of strong backbone" (J. H. Jowett).

V. THE APOSTLES ARE THREATENED AND DISMISSED, 4.13-22. The Sanhedrin marveled at the boldness of Peter and John, who, they perceived, were unlearned and ignorant men, and explained it by the fact that they had companied with Jesus. They could not dispute the fact of the cure—the man was there before their eyes. Nor could they answer the arguments of Peter. "What shall we do with these men?" they questioned, after Peter and John had been sent aside. They couldn't deny the miracle, but they could seek to stop the report of it, "as if that healing were a plague begun, the contagion of which must be stopped," Matthew Henry observes. So they decided to threaten the apostles. Peter and John were recalled and were charged not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. "How magnificent their response! They felt their wills to be caught in the sweeping current of the Infinite." "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God," they said, "judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

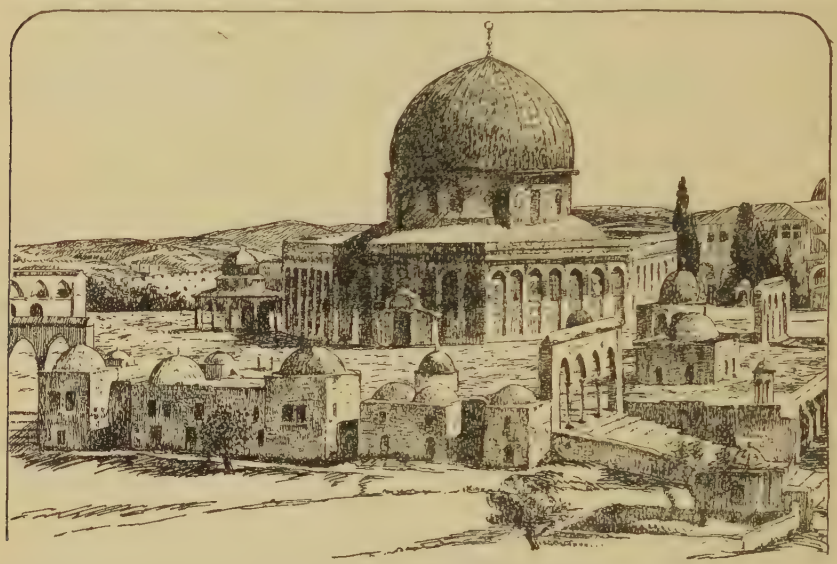
"Tell the birds amidst the buds of spring not to sing; tell the waters welling from the depths not to flow; tell the happy child not to laugh and jump; tell sun and stars not to shine; and when these have obeyed you, then tell the soul which has been baptized with the love of God that it must not

speak of him, and it will laugh you to scorn. It cannot but speak what it has seen and heard" (F. B. Meyer).

After further threatening them, the Sanhedrin let them go.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, 3.1. The Babylonians divided the day into twelve hours, and the Greeks adopted their method. It is supposed that the Jews during their captivity also learned from the Babylonians this method of computing time. The daylight between sunrise and sunset was divided into twelve equal parts, and of course the length of each part, or hour, unlike ours, which are always of the same length, varied according to the season, being much longer in the summer than in the winter. We must remember that in those days there were no



Site of the Temple as It Looks Today

clocks to measure time. Whether the Jews used sundials, or water clocks, or some other contrivance we do not know.

Dr. Abbott reminds us that the maintenance of special hours of prayer, borrowed from the Jews, was continued in the Christian church and increased to seven daily occasions. These are still observed in all religious orders in the Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Churches. The literal observance of the entire prescribed service would occupy nearly the entire twenty-four hours.

A certain man whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, 3.2. Those who have been in Palestine will have no difficulty in visualizing the scene. The lame and the blind, the poor and the diseased, are sitting around every mosque soliciting alms. It is believed that those who come from the house of prayer will be charitable. Whether the beggars are impostors are not, few pass them without throwing down a copper coin worth half a cent.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How many followers of Christ were added at Pentecost? What was the theme of Peter's sermon at Pentecost?

Why Peter's Cure of the Lame Man is Recorded at Length. Some months have passed since Pentecost, and many wonders have been wrought by the apostles. The cure of the lame man Luke narrates because of its far-reaching consequences, as it gave rise to the first persecution by the Jewish authorities.

The Scene. The word "temple," you know, was applied to the whole enclosure with its several courts which rose terrace upon terrace—first the Court of the Gentiles, next the Court of the Women, then the Court of the Israelites, and lastly the Court of the Priests within which was the sanctuary itself. The Court of the Women (so-called because into it women as well as men might enter) was the usual place for the worshipers, and it was always thronged at the hours of prayer.

It is not definitely known where was the Beautiful Gate. Some scholars believe that it led from the city into the first court. Others, that it was between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, facing the Mount of Olives.

Around the inside of the center walls of the Court of the Gentiles were porches, open only toward the Court; they were paved with marble, and their flat roofs of cedar were supported by marble columns. Solomon's Porch was on the east, and was six hundred feet long by seventy-five feet wide. It was called Solomon's, not because it was the very one erected by Solomon, but because it was built on the great wall which Solomon had raised from the valley below, and retained the name of the porch which it replaced.

SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The children in your midst are watching and taking notes of you, your personality, your example. Is your image in their minds all that you could wish it to be? The novelist Dostoevsky bids you "every day and every hour, every minute, walk round yourself, and see that your image is a seemly one." The rulers took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus—to such an extent was the image of their Master reflected in their lives. It is not merely by his words but by the manifestation of his life that a teacher commends both himself and his mission to those whom he teaches. A teacher is a lesson the scholar never forgets. No photographic plate is more sensitive to the image which the sun paints upon it than the child's intelligence to the teacher's example. Nor is it children only who are influenced by the teacher's personality. It was in a Bible Class in India that a Hindu student was asked how he thought that Jesus would come into the room if he were to visit them, and replied, "I think he would come in just as Larsen comes into our class." You are conscientious in the preparation of your lesson, wise and skilful in teaching, zealous in organizing your class, and all this is good, for all this should be done, but when it is all done and well done, it will not avail if you have not been with Jesus yourself.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

GIFTS THAT ARE BETTER THAN MONEY

Beginning the Lesson. In the operating room of a Chinese hospital this prayer hangs on the wall: "All-powerful Lord of Heaven! This, thy child, who is before thee, is sick. We, thy servants, ask thee for skilful hands and for wisdom to relieve pain and cure his body, in order that some day he may understand the love and mercy of his Heavenly Father and return thanks to thee and come to serve thee. We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ the Savior. Amen!"

Peter might have offered this very prayer as he looked down that day upon a certain man sitting at the temple gate. To whom did Peter ascribe his cure? What else is striking in Peter's words to the wondering crowd?

What Silver and Gold Cannot Do. They can do so much. They seem to do almost everything. Even health they can sometimes buy. They can command service and pleasure and freedom from care. But they cannot do all things. There is an affecting scene in The Heart of Midlothian after Effie Deans has been taken a prisoner for her crime. Her little home is overwhelmed with the horror and shame of it, and the Laird of Dumbiedykes draws out his purse, laden with gold, and exclaims, "Jeannie, woman! it's sad work, but siller will help it." "Davie," he questions, "winna siller do't?" But silver and gold can not mend a broken heart.

Gifts Better than Money. We all feel that it is disgraceful for a man to be very rich and give nothing away, but we look complacently enough at the man who makes his culture a mere selfish luxury. But surely to give a man an idea is better than to give him a dollar, unless he is starving and needs something to eat upon the spot. And if you who have no money to give away but have been trained to careful study, to serious and thoughtful lives, only knew it, you have a power of charity that no millionaire possesses.

This is one sort of charity which is far above money. But take another. Higher than intelligence or knowledge, as a gift from man to man, is moral inspiration. A poor, broken man comes to you when your purse is empty, and you are just going out to earn something for yourself, and you succeed in making him feel that it is better to earn than to beg; you succeed in touching the rusty key of his independence, and he goes back with a refreshed manhood, determined to help himself. Tell me, is there any comparison between what you have done for him and what you would have done if you could have filled his pockets with gold, and feasted his hunger off silver dishes? And so to reawaken the sense of purity in a gross, licentious nature, to stir the impulse of honor in a crawling sycophant, to make a coward courageous or a scoffer reverent—these are greater gifts than money.

And then comes sympathy! He who gives sympathy makes some personal bestowal of himself, of his own strength, his own life, into the weakness and deadness that he tries to help. It is indeed a wondrous gift for man to give to man.

But this is not all. If he has God, if he has taken Christ into his nature so that his life is a continual following of the Lord's, then see what a power of benefaction that man may have. Whoever by a Christian word he speaks or by a Christian life he lives, brings a new soul to see the perfect Life and take the perfect Grace, has poured out of his full hands a blessing on his brother that leaves utterly out of sight any gift that riches can bestow on poverty.

Intelligence, inspiration, comfort, religion—these are the things which men are needing everywhere. Ignorant, spiritless, wretched, Christless lives are all about us. As much as these needs of their outgo their need of wealth, so much does the bounty that supplies these needs surpass the bounty that should simply spread their tables and fill their purses.

"Give us bread," the people cried, as they followed Christ from place to place. "Nay, I am the bread," he answered, "take and eat." "Give me water," begged the woman of Samaria, "that I need not come to the well to draw." "The water that I shall give him shall be in him," Christ replied. He gave no money anywhere. What we call charity he could not give, silver and gold had he none. But knowledge such as he gave to Nicodemus, inspiration such as he bestowed on the apostles, comfort such as he brought into the cottage at Bethany, the way to the Father as he opened it wide to the multitudes in the temple, these he was always giving. Himself, his divine Self, he lavished on all who would receive him.

I have tried to open the door of charity to some to whom it has seemed to be shut tight. I am sure that there are many who as they go in and out at the beautiful gate of the temple of a happy life are deeply oppressed at the sight of the many who lie crippled and miserable outside. Silver and gold have they none. I have tried to show that there are other things to give. Your intelligence, your principles, your comfort, your religion—in one word, yourself.—Condensed from New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

Things Money Cannot Buy. Mere money can buy none of the eternal realities of life, all that makes living highest, truest, best. They are as far above its reach as the polar star. It cannot buy love, happiness, honor, truth, justice, self-respect, hope, faith, trust, friendship, loyalty, courage, genius, any of the fine manifestations of mind and heart and soul. When money enters the field of the intangible, it ceases to be legal tender for realities. It can buy only semblances, substitutes; only evils, never virtues. It is only in the market of material things that it can buy what it will.

When Joseph's ten brothers, under the leadership of Judah, hurriedly organized a syndicate to sell him to a company of Ishmaelites for about eleven dollars and a quarter of our money, they sold only the tangible man as a slave, with whatever service might be forced from him. That was all the money bought. It could not buy the real Joseph. His clear head, his high principle, loyalty, generosity, energy, purpose, and those other vital characteristics that made him second only to Pharaoh in all Egypt, could never be bought with money.

The really greatest things in life being beyond the power of mere money to buy or to corner, they are thus revealed as the possibility and privilege of all who will pay for them in the consecrated energy of body, mind, heart, or soul.—William George Jordan.

What Has Religion to Do with Health? The personal experience which Mr. E. Stanley Jones records in The Christ of the Indian Road is most remarkable. After eight years of exhausting work in India he suffered several collapses and came

to America for a year's furlough. On his return to India he again suffered from his old trouble. Twice a complete rest for several months was taken among the hills, but on returning to work he saw that he was at the end of his resources, his health was shattered. He believed that he would have to give up his missionary career, go back to America and go to work on a farm in an endeavor to regain his health. While in prayer at a meeting in Lucknow, not thinking about himself, a Voice seemed to say to him, "Are you yourself ready for this work to which I have called you?" "No, Lord, I am done for," was his inward answer; "I have reached the end of my rope." The Voice replied, "If you will turn that over to me and not worry about it, I will take care of it." Quickly he answered, "Lord, I close the bargain right here."

"A great peace settled into my heart and pervaded me," he writes. "I knew it was done! Life—abundant life—had taken possession of me. I was so lifted up that I scarcely touched the road as I quietly walked home that night. For days after that I hardly knew I had a body. I went through the days working all day and far into the night, and came down to bedtime wondering why in the world I should ever go to bed at all, for there was not the slightest trace of tiredness of any kind. I seemed possessed by Life and Peace and Rest—by Christ himself.

"Nine of the most strenuous years of my life have gone by since then, and the old trouble has never returned, and I have never had such health. But it was more than a physical touch. I seemed to have tapped new life for body, mind, and spirit. Life was on a permanently higher level. And I had done nothing but take it!

"I suppose that this experience can be picked to pieces psychologically and explained. It does not matter. Life is bigger than processes and overflows them. Christ to me had become Life."

What Has Religion to Do with Fatigue and Nerves? "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." Does that have anything to do with physical strength? Have you read the chapter in Streeter's volume on the spirit, by an English physician, who points out that in most cases it is not that the spirit is willing and the flesh weak, but that the flesh is willing and the spirit weak, that there is not enough spiritual morale to keep the flesh going?

One of the things that pleased me most in connection with my own ministry in New York occurred during the influenza epidemic. A woman at the head of a nurses' hospital was working twenty hours a day, with an enormous influx of new patients, and many of her assistants down with influenza. After a few weeks of this thing she said to her assistant:

"I cannot stand this any longer! I must either go to a specialist or go to church."

She had not been a churchgoer; had not been inside a church for fifteen years.

On Sunday night she walked out. One of the nurses said to her, "You would better go to bed," but she went to church; to our church, because it happened to be the nearest. Afterwards she came to me asking to be received into the church. She said:

"I do not know what you preached about. I was just all in. But there was something about the hymns and the prayers and the atmosphere and the message that bucked me up. I did not have to go to bed. I went through the whole epidemic. And I think I ought to unite with the church."

It made me happy to think that there was something in Christianity that refreshes. "He shall drink of the brook, therefore shall he lift up the head"; "Rivers of water in a dry place"; "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land." What has religion, then, to do with fatigue?

Again, what has Christianity to do with nervousness? Is there anything in our religion that can cause serenity, repose, tranquillity? Can it help us to go to sleep?

Do you know a little book, "Outwitting Our Nerves"? It is very helpful to an ignoramus like me. It is written by a physician in southern California, and the literary flavor and religious flavor were assisted by a Y. M. C. A. secretary. It is a thoroughly religious book, a helpful book which can be put into the hands of people who think they have not enough vitality to work in the church. What has religion to do with nerves? There is a large subject.—Henry Sloane Coffin.

For Discussion. 1. Modern medical missions.

2. Physical fitness and the public health. See Chapter V of Christian Citizenship, by Francis J. McConnell.

3. Psychology and the health ministry of the church.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do you think of Gamaliel's advice? 2. Is success a criterion of truth? 3. Name others who have counted it an honor to suffer for Christ. 4. What is the source of courage?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GIVING OUR BEST FOR OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. The temple gate which was called Beautiful was made of brass, and when the sun shone upon it, it flashed with light and became a "glory" gate. In front of this beautiful gate a group of suffering people had collected. Some were blind, others were sick, and among them was a poor cripple. He had been lame forty years, all his life, and begging was his only means of livelihood. Every day he was carried to this spot, and here he sat and held out his hands to all who passed him on their way into the temple.

When Peter and John appeared on the scene the man asked them for alms. They stopped and listened to his plea. "What would Christ do if he were here?" thought Peter. "What would Christ have us do in his name?" Christ had often healed the sick and made the lame to walk, and Peter believed that it was Christ's will that this man should be made strong.

The man wanted money, and Peter had none. But Peter had other gifts better for the man than money. Freely he gave them, as he himself had freely received so much from Christ. First, he gave the man sympathy, showing it by his looks and by the tones of his voice, as he said, "Look on us." The man was all expectancy. Then what did Peter say? Peter thus gave Christ to the man, reminding him of Jesus of Nazareth, recalling to his mind all that he had ever heard of Christ. Next he gave a wonderful command, bidding him arise. What else did Peter do? What happened to the man? How did he show his joy? Whom did he praise? Why were the people surprised?

How was the miracle wrought? There were wonderful happenings among the soldiers in the Great War. Men who were blinded, or had become deaf and dumb, under great excitement or suspense, suddenly recovered sight, or hearing, or speech. But it was not excitement that made the crippled limbs of that man strong. Nor was it the apostle's sympathy or force of will. It was not by his own power or godliness, as he himself said. To what did Peter attribute the cure? It was done through faith. Peter believed Christ could and would do it. The man believed, too, and showed it by his prompt obedience to the command. By faith in his name hath his name made this man strong.

She Gave her Best. The train stopped at a seaside station, and a pale girl who coughed incessantly, alighted. A young woman with a brogue and kind, merry face ran to meet her.

"Ah, an' it's welcome ye are, my dear! Take me arms. It's just a step. There it is—that white cottage on the beach. It was all planned and built by Miss Hayes. She keeps it up. From April to November there are ten of her friends there gettin' rested and strong. They each stay two weeks. Faith, an' that's a tiresome cough! We'll be gettin' rid of that at wance, plase God!"

"You are so kind. I know you'll make me well," said the poor shop-girl, smiling.

"Is it me? It's Miss Hayes as'll cure you. I'm only her Irish chambermaid. I wish I could do some good meself; but I haven't a rid cent to give. My money all goes back to the ould folks in the ould country; but Miss Hayes's father—he's millions! She can help the poor!" and Molly's blue eyes filled with tears. She walked slowly, her arm around the sick woman's waist.

"You'll have a wee room all to yourself. I'll make you crame toast for tay—I'm foine on crame toast," she ran on cheerily.

"Is that Miss Hayes in the door? Why, she is a young woman!" said the startled newcomer, as a slight girl advanced briskly to meet her.

"Ah? You are Jane Potts?" glancing at a list in her hand. "I hope you will enjoy your holiday, Jane. You will stay until this day two weeks. A copy of the Home rules is in your chamber. Tea is at six, precisely. All lights must be out at ten, to the minute. Tomorrow morning I will see you and examine into your situation, habits and so on. I always exercise an oversight over the families, work and life of my women. You must go to your room now and rest."

"But I am not one of her women!" said the girl hotly, as she climbed the stairs. Molly heaped the pillows on her bed, brought her a cordial which checked the cough, and with affectionate pats bade her sleep until tea-time.

Molly looked after her mistress with reverence. God, she thought, had given her a great work to do for him. "An' what can I do that has no money at all?" she thought, shaking her head.

This picture needs no words of ours to explain its meaning.—Youth's Companion.

A Successor of Peter. A young African was famous for his wonderful eyes. When the tribesmen went out to hunt, he was always taken with them. He could see traces of animals before anyone else, and knew where the elephants or lions had been, and which way they had gone. In war-time he could perceive the smoke of an enemy's camp miles away. So he became chief of the tribe, because of his marvelous sight.

The years passed. Then something terrible happened. The chief found that others could see things before he could. And then, at midday, everything was dark. He was blind. An ox-cart came creaking toward his village and the people ran out to see who was coming. But the chief remained in his hut. Word was brought to him that a healer had arrived. It was one of Christ's devoted servants. He was seeking open doors where he could preach, but he was also opening closed doors where possible. He examined the chief's eyes, and after long and skilful treatment, at last he gave back that precious gift of sight. When the bandage was removed, the African looked on the white face of Livingstone. But what else did he see? With his soul's eyes he saw the radiant face of Christ. The good news spread, and the missionary preached the unsearchable riches of Christ not only in word, but also in deed.—J. W. G. Ward.

Doing his Best for Jesus's Sake. Bishop Berry tells of an incident he witnessed in a railroad train. A little old woman was on the express, and when the conductor saw her ticket he said in a coarse, loud voice: "What are you doing on this train? We don't stop at your town. No stops till we get to Scranton. Guess you haven't traveled much, old woman. Next time you go away from home you'd better take some one along to take care of you. We'll take you on to Scranton and you can get back tonight, some time!" The little woman was thoroughly frightened, till a young man across the aisle, perhaps eighteen years of age, crossed over and asked permission to sit by her and explain. He himself had got on the wrong train twice, people often did, and it was not so bad as the conductor said, for he knew that in only an hour after they reached Scranton another train would take her back to her destination. Then he began talking about other things to relieve her mind, and after he had made her forget her troubles in a good laugh he resumed his seat.

Bishop Berry had heard it all, and becoming intensely interested in the lad went over to him and asked why it was that he had taken so much pains to comfort that lonely stranger in her distress. This is what the young man told him, after much hesitation: "I was glad of a chance to cheer her up. My life up to about eight months ago was a selfish life. My ambition was simply to have a good time. But my Master showed me that that was a small, mean way to live, and I promised that if he would help me, I would never again let a day pass that I did not try to do at least one little service for him. When I heard the conductor talking so roughly to the poor old soul, and saw how frightened and worried she was, I said to myself: 'Good enough! There's my chance.' So I just went over and smoothed her down for Jesus's sake."

"I have heard many sermons on Christian consecration and Christian service," added Bishop Berry, "but I never heard such a sermon as that preached to me by the lad on the railroad that day. It was not an act prompted by mere pity. It was not a service that had its limits in humanitarian endeavor. No, no. 'I went over and smoothed her down for Jesus's sake.'"

Sentence Sermons. Freely ye received, freely give.—Jesus.

One smile can glorify a day,
One word new hope impart;
The least disciple need not say
There is no alms to give away
If love be in the heart.—Phœbe Cary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire lesson, verses 17 to 42. 2. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 28? 3. What made Peter so courageous? 4. How may you gain moral courage?

PETER UNDAUNTED BY PERSECUTION

GOLDEN TEXT: We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5.29

LESSON Acts 5.17-42 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.1-6

ACTS 5.27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. 31 Him did God exalt with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. 32 And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them. 34 But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honor of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. 35 And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: 39 but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. 42 And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus *as* the Christ.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER AND JOHN AGAIN IMPRISONED ARE FREED, verses 17-25. "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard," had been the bold declaration of Peter when he and John were brought before the Sanhedrin (our last lesson). Upon their release they continued their preaching, and the people flocked to hear them. The jealousy and enmity of high priests and Sadducees were aroused, and they had the apostles again imprisoned.

"From bitterness preserve me, Lord;
From jealous thoughts protect my day;
Again the stroke of envy's sword
Held me to hold my way.

And grant my soul sufficient grace,
To gladden at another's prize,
And look upon his eager face
With sympathetic eyes" (Henry Robinson Palmer).

Early the next morning the Sanhedrin learned that their prisoners had escaped, although the prison was found securely locked and the guards at the doors. They learned also that the prisoners were preaching in the temple. Great was their consternation. What could be done with such defiant men who had an unknown Ally to help them out of prison?

II. PETER'S BOLDNESS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN, verses 26-32. The apostles were quietly brought before the Sanhedrin. The high priest charged them with disobeying the Sanhedrin's orders, and with intent to make them answerable for the death of Jesus. "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name," he declared, carefully avoiding the mention of the name of Jesus which he so hated. "And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching," he cried. What a fine testimony to the work of the apostles, coming from their bitterest enemy! The secret of their success in their preaching and the reason for their disobedience of the Sanhedrin Peter announced in our brief, eloquent sentence, "We must obey God rather than men."

Said William H. Seward in the Senate when the anti-slavery agitation was at its height, "There is a higher law than human institutions." It is this belief in a higher law, the realization of the supremacy of divine authority over all human authority, that has sustained countless numbers of Christian

heroes since Peter boldly proclaimed his intention of obeying God rather than men.

Then, strong in the consciousness of the presence of God, Peter calmly added that the apostles and the Holy Spirit were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus whom they, his enemies, had slain. At no time does Peter appear more admirable than at this moment. He could not be browbeaten. He was heroic in his plain speaking.

"When tyrant feet are tramping upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us bend and writhe beneath the iron heel.
In thy name we assert our right by sword or tongue or pen,
And even the headsman's ax may flash thy message unto men" (John Hay).

III. GAMALIEL'S ADVICE, verses 33-39. No wonder the authorities were thoroughly angered. There seemed to them only one course possible—they must silence the apostles by death. But there was one cool person there, a learned doctor of the law named Gamaliel, who had the prisoners removed and then, bidding the enraged men beware what they were about to do, calmed them by reminding them of others who had "given themselves out to be somebody"—Theudas and Judas of Galilee—but whose claims had come to naught. Gamiliel seems to have looked on the movement as political rather than religious, for these parallels he quotes were attempted rebellions. But any course of reasoning that would prevent his colleagues from giving way to their fury was allowable. He avoided an investigation of the truth of Peter's charge against the Sanhedrin and advised that these men be let alone, for if they were impostors their work would be overthrown, but if they were divinely commissioned, then they, the authorities, would be fighting against God.

"Gamaliel had a glimpse of the truth of the impotence of material force against truth, how it is of a quick and spiritual essence which cannot be cleaved in pieces with a sword, but lives on in spite of all. But the advice on the whole is a low and bad one. It rests on false principles; it takes a false view of a man's duty; it is not wholly sincere; and it is one impossible to be carried out."

"Here is success turned into a criterion of truth. It is such, no doubt, in the long run, but not until then, and so till the end it is utterly false to argue that a thing is true because multitudes think it to be so. Even if it were true that success is a criterion, we have to help God to ensure the success of his truth.

"Here is a selfish neutrality pretending to judicial calmness. In every age some great causes which are God's are pressing for decision. In many of them you may be disqualified for taking sides. But feel that you are bound to cast your influence on the side which conscience approves, and bound to settle which side that is" (Alexander Maclaren).

IV. THE OUTCOME, verses 40-42. The authorities heeded Gamaliel's advice. The apostles were freed after being beaten and again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.

During the persecution days of the Conspiracy Trial in Korea, Christians who were not arrested felt that there must be something wrong with them. A native Methodist pastor went to the missionary and said: "Moksa, there must be something wrong with our church. I fear we are lacking in faith. There are thirty-seven Presbyterians in jail and only one Methodist. I fear the Lord does not count us worthy to suffer persecution."

Every day, in the temple and at home, the disciples taught and proclaimed Jesus as the Christ.

"Recoveries from sickness, releases out of troubles, are to be looked upon by us as granted, not that we may enjoy the comforts, but that God may be honored with the services of our life" (Matthew Henry).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, verse 34. His position as president of the Sanhedrin, his long experience, his Rabbinical training, his old age, and his knowledge that the national liberty depended on keeping things quiet, would be very likely to exaggerate tendencies to prudence and cautiousness.

It is, of course, possible that he based his counsel of letting the followers of Jesus alone, on the grounds which he adduces, because he knew that reasons more favorable to Christians would have had no weight with the Sanhedrin. Old church traditions make him out to have been a Christian, and the earliest Christian romance, a very singular book, of which the main object was to blacken the apostle Paul, roundly asserts that at the date of this advice he was "secretly our brother," and that he remained in the Sanhedrin to further Christian views. But there seems not the slightest reason to suppose there was truth in this.—Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

They beat them, verse 40. According to the Jewish custom their backs were bared and their arms tied to a low pillar so that they stood in a stooping posture while blows from leather thongs rained on their flesh. The number of blows was limited by law to forty, and lest a mistake in counting be made, thirty-nine only were given.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. When had Peter accused the Sanhedrin of the murder of Jesus? When had he showed himself courageous?

Why the Rulers Were so Aroused against the Apostles. Probably several years had passed since Pentecost. Many cures had been wrought at the hands of the apostles, and the people believed them "signs" from heaven. Popular enthusiasm grew from day to day; faith in the apostles' power became so great that the people even believed that Peter's shadow falling on the sick in the streets had healing virtue. The news spread beyond Jerusalem, and the sick and demon-possessed from other parts of the land were brought to them. The rulers were thoroughly aroused. Before this they had arrested and threatened the leaders, Peter and John; now they were bent on severer measures.

When Peter and John were freed after their first trial, as recorded in our lesson of last week, they returned to "their own company" and reported all that had been said to them. The disciples united in praise and prayer. "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness," they prayed.

The Place. The prison in which Peter and John were placed was probably a room within the temple enclosure. When freed, they went into the outer court and there taught the people. The Sanhedrin had formerly held its meetings within the temple enclosure, but at this time their council chamber was without the walls, and to this hall the apostles were brought.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

When Roosevelt was reading the proof of one of his books he found that his words, "The children were timed as they ran around the track," had been made by the compositor to read, "The children were timid as they ran around the track." On the margin of the proof Mr. Roosevelt wrote: "The printer that says my children were timid inspires my thoughts with the idea of murder!"

No one likes to be a coward nor to be thought a coward, but we all know noble yet shrinking souls who have failed to conquer timidity and who in consequence have fallen short of the high attainments they might have reached. Perhaps this lesson may be your opportunity of bringing to the eyes of some pupil the light of a new determination to cast aside fear, physical and moral.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SOURCE OF COURAGE

Beginning the Lesson. You remember that famous character of Dickens, Mark Tapley, who was always sighing for an opportunity to come out strong by showing a brave and cheerful front when everything was going wrong. The greater the adversity, the better the opportunity for courage, he seemed to believe. And some one comments: "Whether they are sighing for it or not, the majority of men get their opportunity of doing the things that Mark Tapley was always wishing he could do. Life has a great knack for getting men into tight corners and making big demands upon their courage and resourcefulness. It may run along smoothly and uneventfully enough for a time, but the storm and the testing are almost sure to come before long, and often they come rather unexpectedly and with disconcerting

suddenness. And a man ought to begin to question very seriously the reality and depth of his religious profession if with it he is still a coward or a weakling. Surely one of the best tests of a man's religion is how it helps him to meet the everyday difficulties of life with some courage and high spirit. If a Christian doesn't show up well when life is going hard and the winds are unusually rough and menacing, at least he ought to be very modest about making professions when the fine weather comes again.

The apostle Peter shows up well in our lesson today. What was his opportunity for "coming out strong"? How did he show his courage?

Convictions, or Opinions? Some of us pride ourselves on our convictions when perhaps we should speak of our opinions or our prejudices or even our obsessions. "Conviction" is one of the noble words of the language and ought not to be misused. It implies a duty, a responsibility, that is not associated with such a word as opinion or prejudice or obsession. Those words, as contrasted with conviction, range from the negative to the ignoble.

The Latin word from which conviction comes is *convinco,* and it means "to conquer." If we regard conviction merely as an idea by which we are conquered, we recognize only in part the etymology of the word, and we have it then suggesting a state of mind that is better expressed by the word obsession—which represents an undesirable mental condition; but if we look upon our convictions not merely as ideas that have conquered us but as ideas with which we are to conquer, we gain a true conception of all that the word means, and we shall be likely to employ it in a manner worthy of its original high significance.

A man who has true convictions is not static, like a man who has only opinions; he is dynamic. He inspires in others opinions that harmonize with his convictions. Most people have not mental or emotional energy enough to convert their opinions into convictions; they are content to sit quiet on their opinions and wait until some one with convictions starts them moving in the direction toward which their opinions point.

Educated young men and women should aim to be persons not merely of opinions but of convictions. They should try to overcome the mental laziness or inertia and the emotional apathy that characterize the merely ruminant being; they should acquire convictions, not at haphazard and upon superficial impulse or under the temptation of expediency, but by the guidance of all their intellectual and moral zeal; and when, having got down to fundamentals, they have rested their convictions upon the rock of right, they should try to use them as Lincoln used them—as a lever with which to move the world.—The Youth's Companion.

More for God. When Xavier was told that he had been chosen for a mission to the East Indies, he confessed that he had long cherished a secret desire to labor in those far-distant lands. God, he said, had already revealed to him what great things he must suffer there for his Master's sake. There passed before his eyes as he slept a vision of stormy seas and barren shores and barbarous people, a promise of toil and hunger and peril and persecution. And when he beheld this picture of his own coming trials, he was so transported by the thought of being counted worthy to suffer for Christ that he cried out fervently in the Latin which was the mother-tongue of his prayers: *Amplius, Domine, amplius*—that is to say, "Yet more, O Lord yet more: give me more to endure, more to undergo, more to overcome."

Such was the fiery watchword of Xavier's life—a life which, for all its superstition and fanaticism, bears the marks of an apostle. Francis Xavier himself, with his quenchless zeal, his tireless energy, his boundless sacrifice, his eager ambition to spend and be spent for God—this great missionary came nearer than some of his critics to St. Paul's own example, just as his passionate prayer sounds like an echo of St. Paul's words: "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that ye abound more and more."—The Bible in the World.

Moral Courage. Physical daring, coolness of nerve, contempt of death, are qualities which we recognize as heroic, and we assemble them all under the name of courage. But on any true analysis we shall discover that that alone is really courage which is a temper of high resolution dominated by a moral aim. Physical bravery is one thing, moral courage quite another. A man may be intrepid because he is stupid, because he is destitute of the imagination which both anticipates and multiplies danger. An ignorant man can often perform feats of daring impossible to an educated man, because the educated man is appalled by risks which the

ignorant man does not even perceive. But it by no means follows that the ignorant is the braver man. Ridley and Latimer might have trembled had they been set to climb the Matterhorn, yet they were no less brave than the Swiss guide to whom the dizzy crags and ice-slopes of the Matterhorn are a road trodden with familiar ease. They also were brave, but in another and higher way, for courage is a quality of the spirit rather than of the nerves; it is, as I have said, a temper of high resolution dominated by a moral aim. When, therefore, we are told that the bravest things done on the battlefields of the great war were often done by the most nervous and highly strung men, we know what is meant. These nervous and highly strung men knew that they could not rely upon their bodies. They knew that they must draw forth the forces of the spirit, and that these forces could subdue and dominate the flesh. An idea ruled them, a spiritual idea, and it was powerful enough to make the flesh its servant. And that is precisely the method of Christ. He implants in the mind new ideas, the fatherhood of God as a refuge from temporal anxiety, the insignificance of the body as compared with the spirit, as a remedy for the fear of death; and where these ideas are dominant, men do cease to be anxious for the morrow, and they do rise superior to the fear of death in the pursuit of truth and duty.—W. J. Dawson.

The Upward Look. Whatever the defeats, the misfortunes of yesterday, there is always a new birth of courage in the dawn of a new day. When we look upon the spaciousness and tranquillity of a morning sky, the specters of fear and grief which haunted the night are forgotten. Yesterday millions of eyes looked up to a great wonder of the heavens, where gigantic and almost immeasurable processes were at work, and what was our dominant thought? Mine was, the eternal steadfastness of the starry order. Things go wrong in the human world, but they never go wrong there. Timed to a moment, the great shadow falls upon the earth, and at a sudden predestined moment the light returns. If ever there was an occasion to say, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world," this was the occasion.

And to think this is to be of good courage, it is to face the problems of human life with a new fortitude and serenity of temper. Looking down, walking with our eyes fixed only on an earth often veiled in strange shadows, we lose courage. But looking up we perceive God at work, eternal strength and wisdom engaged in an eternal task, and we learn to say,

"High in the heavens, eternal God,
Thy goodness in full glory shines,
Thy truth shall break through every cloud
That veils and darkens thy designs."

And it seems to me that what we most need in the life of our day is this note of cheerful courage.—W. J. Dawson.

The Source of Courage. Henry M. Stanley, on returning from Africa, said: "On all my expeditions, prayer made me stronger, morally and mentally, than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes, or dull my mind, or close my ears; but, on the contrary, it gave me joy, and pride, in my work, and lifted me hopefully over the one thousand five hundred miles of forest tracks, eager to face the day's perils and fatigues.

"We meet, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with thee?"

For Discussion. 1. Refrain from these men and let them alone. The policy of patience.

2. Opportunists.

3. Has the church of today the courage of its convictions in witnessing for Christ? See Chapter XV of The Transfigured Church, by J. H. Jowett.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How was this a critical time in the history of Christianity? 2. What verse is the heart of Peter's preaching at Cæsarea? 3. In the Merchant of Venice, what does Shylock the Jew

say to Bassanio the Gentile about eating with him? 4. Is there any excuse for speaking with scorn of those of another race than our own? 5. What do you think of the Ku Klux Klan? 6. How may a racial prejudice be overcome?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

STANDING FIRM UNDER PERSECUTION

Beginning the Lesson. After a severe storm along the Atlantic Coast when the waves were sweeping far inland and tearing houses from their foundations which were supposed to be beyond the reach of any waves, an old lady was seen standing at her door and wringing a mop—she was trying to keep out the Atlantic Ocean! What a picture she made of useless effort! We have another such a picture today. Instead of the old lady there are the great and powerful Jewish rulers, members of the great tribunal known as the Sanhedrin. Instead of her mop there are scourges—rods, or whips made of cords or leather—with which they have ordered Peter and the other apostles flogged. Instead of the Atlantic Ocean there is the onward rushing tide of Christ's influence and power. These Jewish rulers think that by persecuting the apostles they will silence them, and put an end to the growth of Christ's Kingdom, but they might as well have tried to stop the onward rush of the mighty Atlantic.

What preceded the bringing of the apostles before the council, or Sanhedrin? What did the high priest say to them? Which of his words were high praise of the apostles? What did he mean by the last clause of verse 28? What was Peter's answer? What do you think of that answer? And then of what did he accuse his judges? What was Gamaliel's advice? How were the apostles treated before being freed? How did they regard this treatment?

When to Be Stubborn. *Stubborn* comes from a good old English word, "stub," meaning the short stump of a tree, from which all the branches have long since been broken or cut off. The wind has no effect upon it. There the "stub" stands, firm and immovable, almost like a rock. Now, if you think for a moment, it will dawn upon you what the real meaning of "stubborn" is.

Think of Peter having become a "stub." You remember what a cowardly fellow he showed himself one night. Now a great change has come over him. He is "stubborn." When told that a certain course adopted by him is disapproved of, he stands firm and says, "We must obey God rather than men." The resurrection of Jesus taught Peter many a lesson. He knew that his present action might mean giving up his life. But while he looked at the magistrates, and knew that the Roman government was behind them, he remembered that on his side was the King of kings. "We must obey God rather than men," he said.

Lying before a fire in an American log cabin, a little "stubborn" fellow committed to memory the four Gospels, Æsop's Fables, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. When he was nineteen, he saw a young girl sold at public auction, and told his brother that if he ever had a chance he would hit slavery the hardest blow he could. Several years later he was elected a Senator and later a President. Many Americans who love Lincoln's memory—for it was he—think that the name of Abraham Lincoln will one day be mentioned alongside of Julius Cæsar, Paul, Shakespeare, and—must we ourselves add?—Peter. What made Lincoln "stubborn" was that God had written a law of love in his heart. His motto was, "I must obey God rather than men."—The Children's Great Texts of the Bible.

Others Who Stood Firm under Persecution. John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, was put in prison because he preached the gospel, and was threatened with banishment from the country if, on his release, he continued to preach. Bold words were those which he spoke to his persecutors: "If I were out of prison today, I would preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God."

When Luther at Worms was commanded by the Emperor Charles V and the Pope to recant, he replied: "I cannot recant. It is not wise, it is not safe, to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me!"

When Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, was opposed by the Indians he said to them as he resolutely gazed at their threatening faces: "I am about the work of the great God, and my God is with me; so I fear neither you nor all the sachems in the country."

During the Boxer uprising in China a prosperous Chinese merchant came to the missionary and asked to be baptized at once. "Would it not be better to wait until

the storm of persecution has blown over?" the missionary questioned. "A public confession now might endanger you." "No," replied the merchant, "I don't want to wait. It is this very thing that leads me to desire to be a Christian. I have seen the Christians go down into the darkness of a horrible death triumphantly, and now that I know it is their religion that sustains them and enables them to do this, I want their religion at once."

The Courage of Christ. Some one asked K'ang Yu Wei, the Chinese reformer, what seemed to him the most striking quality in Jesus. He replied that what appealed to him most in the personality of Jesus was his courage—the manliness which could so quietly and dauntlessly face the hatred of so many of his fellow countrymen, the fierce enmity of the proud Pharisees, and, above all, the certainty of death, and of the outward failure of his mission; the courage which undertook a work so constructive, the valor which could make and could ask from others, such large sacrifices.

Brave Soldiers of the Cross. There is a beautiful story told about forty gladiators who had made profession of their faith in Christ as their Savior. When the Roman emperor learned that they were Christians he gave orders for them to recant or be transported to the loneliest spot in the mountains of northern Italy to perish from lack of food and shelter. To a man they refused to recant.

That night, as the officer of the guard lay in his tent, he was aroused by a chant that the winds brought to his ears. "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Christ, ask of him the victory and claim from him the crown" were the words he heard.

He thought about the devotion of these men to their Leader. He marveled, for he knew that no Roman soldier ever felt such a devotion. And then suddenly the flap of his tent opened and a poor wretch rushed in and fell at his knees, exclaiming, "I recant."

"Art thou the only one of thy number who durst ask this?" the officer asked.

"The only one."

Tearing off his cloak the Roman officer threw it over the shivering man and exclaimed, "Then I will have thy place." Out into the night he went, and soon the chant again arose: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Christ, ask of him the victory, and claim from him the crown."

He Had the Courage of his Convictions. Our victorious football team was scrubbing and changing clothes in a spacious dancing hall of a not altogether too irreproachable saloon. An uproarious gang of a sporty fraternity had crowded the available space that they might be seen with the heroes. Their habits of imbibing alcohol, of fouling the atmosphere with bad smoke, low conversation and songs, being the custom of the time, passed quite unnoticed.

Suddenly there was a hush. Our captain was standing on a table with nothing but his knickers on, his physique a sermon to the animated clothes pegs that filled the room.

"Gentlemen, the person on the stand here," he said quietly, "has commenced a parody on the Bible which is exceedingly distasteful to me. If he would kindly defer it till decency no longer compels my presence to interfere with your pleasure, I should be greatly obliged to you all."

There was a dead hush. The "person" collapsed, and some one started a popular song. His discomfiture found no sympathy even from his friends. There were in our team several somewhat feeble-kneed Christians, really good fellows, but they feared to set themselves up as better than others. Years after the incident one of these men told me that the realization of the fellowship proclaimed by this simple protest had meant more to him than any amount of sermons.—Grenfell.

Sentence Sermon.

Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.—Longfellow.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of Peter's vision on the housetop at Joppa. 2. What was the lesson of that vision? 3. Who was Cornelius, and what was his vision? 4. What great lesson did Peter learn, and how did he put it into practice? 5. What great men of another race do you admire? 6. How should you treat one whose skin differs from yours in color?

PETER PREACHING TO GENTILES

GOLDEN TEXT: For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10.12

LESSON Acts, Chapters 10 and 11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67.1-7

ACTS 10.34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: 38 *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. HOW A GENTILE WAS PREPARED FOR DISCIPLESHIP, verses 1-8. Cornelius was a Roman centurion in command at Cæsarea. One night he had a vision in which an angel said to him, "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have gone up for a memorial before God."

Then the angel bade Cornelius send to Joppa for Peter, who was staying with Simon the tanner by the seaside. Cornelius was a Gentile, and Jews would not enter the homes of Gentiles. Yet Cornelius obeyed the command. He called two of his household servants and one of his soldiers, explained to them his vision, and sent them to Joppa.

"Great thoughts are in the air for those who are open-minded; noble impulses crowd the highways for those who are ready to receive and act upon them" (Hamilton Wright Mabie).

II. HOW PETER WAS PREPARED FOR A STARTLING DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY, verses 9-16. The next day, at the time the messengers of Cornelius were nearing Joppa, Peter went upon the housetop to pray. While praying he fell into a trance. In his trance he beheld a vision of a receptacle resembling a great sheet let down from heaven by its four corners, having in it all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things, and he heard a voice saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." "Not so, Lord," as of old Peter spoke, horrified at the thought; "for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." He had strictly observed the Levitical law which prescribed what animals could be slaughtered for food and prescribed also the method of slaughter.

"Men and women allow themselves still to become slaves of routine and prisoners of custom. When something new is suggested, they hold up their hands and say, 'Not so . . . for we never.' This temper has been the great impediment in the way of progress. The question we have to settle is whether the unusual thing is true. Some of the worst crimes of the world lie at the door of men who said, 'Not so, for we have never.' "

Then to his great astonishment Peter heard a voice saying, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Three times this sheet-like receptacle with its

contents was let down and then taken up. All had come from God, and the truth the vision proclaimed was that what God had made and given was good in his sight.

"The vision was evidently in its form and in its direction the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts, to be pondered on, and doubted. Besides this, the apostle was in a state of hunger. In a vision things meet for food presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the *form* in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the *direction* depended partly on his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the church. But the eternal truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and the supernatural closely bordering on each other" (F. W. Robertson).

"One of the ways in which God speaks to men is through the play of suggestions which find their entrance into full consciousness by coming through the half-conscious. The life moves through a round of sights and sounds to which at the moment the mind pays little attention. The down-cellar door into the subconscious, or the half-conscious, is for the most of us standing ajar throughout the day. We see things without at first noticing them closely. Then we recall them or half-recall them. Finally we begin to brood over what we have seen, without realizing that we are brooding. Then in a flash of vision the truth leaps upon us. It does not leap, however, except where a landing-place has already been prepared. It does not seize a mind that is not seizable. We cannot explain Peter's grasp on the mission to the Gentiles in terms of physical hunger and recalled glimpses of sails. The news of the conversion of this or that Gentile, the increasing sense of the inadequacy of the Law as a means of salvation, the constant search for the real meaning of the gospel, all had their part in leading up to the glorious consummation. This means that divine Providence uses the total environment of a men, the sum of events that occur day by day, in leading him to the truth" (Francis J. McConnell).

III. THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED AND ACCEPTED FOR PUTTING THE LESSON LEARNED INTO PRACTISE, verses 17-33. The lesson of the vision, that distinctions not only of foods but of peoples were abolished, Peter was pondering in his mind when the arrival of the messengers from Cornelius made it plain. "There was affinity, it seems, between the minds of these two men, Peter and Cornelius—a singular, mysterious sympathy. In the scientific world, similar coincidences perpetually take place; discoveries, apparently unconnected, without any apparent link between the minds which make them, are announced from different parts of the earth almost simultaneously. No man, perhaps, has been altogether unconscious of mental sympathies, coincidences of thought, which are utterly inexplicable. All that I deduce from this is the solemn awfulness of the universe in which we live. We are surrounded by mystery" (F. W. Robertson).

The messengers had found the home of Simon the tanner where Peter was staying, and were asking at the gate for Peter. Peter called the messengers of Cornelius in and lodged them over night. On the morrow he took friends with him and went to Cæsarea.

"Have your visions of God, but descend from the housetop to answer the men who knock at your door" (F. B. Meyer).

IV. PETER'S SERMONS, verses 34-43. At the home of Cornelius Peter found many Gentile kinsmen and friends of the former awaiting him, and learned from Cornelius himself the way in which he had been led to send for him. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that heareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him," exclaimed the apostle. The solemnity of the occasion and the weightiness of Peter's message are indicated by the words with which they are introduced—"And Peter opened his mouth and said."

God does not judge persons by their birth or external conditions. The race or nationality of an individual does not affect the divine judgment; fear of God and right living in any one secures his approval.

My resolve: to put away all prejudice against those of other races and

other nationalities, and to endeavor to see others in the light of the Christ who died for them.

To those Gentiles Peter then preached the Christ. "He is Lord of all." In the Greek the word *he* is emphatic: to show this, the words have been rendered, "He, yes he, is Lord of all," of Gentiles as well as Jews. "You yourselves know the story of what took place in the life of Jesus," Peter declared, "and we are witnesses of all things, of his life—how he went about doing good—of his crucifixion and resurrection, and how he charged us to preach unto the people and to testify that he is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead." And Peter ended his sermon by saying that every one—even Gentiles—who believed on him shall receive remission of sins.

V. THE GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ARE BAPTIZED, verses 44-48. Peter's sermon was interrupted by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence. "And they of the circumcision that believed," Peter and the six other Jews who had accompanied him to the house of Cornelius, were amazed, for they heard the Gentiles "speak with tongues," as the Jews had spoken on the Day of Pentecost. "Can any men forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" questioned Peter. And he commanded that the Gentiles be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

VI. THE BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS DISCUSSED AND APPROVED AT JERUSALEM, verses 11.1-18. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, the other apostles upbraided him for entering into the home of Gentiles and eating with them. Peter justified his conduct by telling them of the two visions and of the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Who was I that I could withstand God?" he questioned. When they heard Peter's words they glorified God and said, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Peter went up upon the house top to pray, about the sixth hour, verse 9. The roof of the house was flat, or slightly raised in the center to allow the rain to run off. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence," was the law given by Moses, Dt. 22.8. This battlement, or balustrade, was often three to four feet high and concealed a person sitting or kneeling on the housetop. There was usually an outside stairway from the street, and also one through the house leading to the roof.

Many were the activities carried on upon the housetop; there corn was dried, linen was hung up, exercise was taken, booths were erected during the Feast of Tabernacles, and there in hot weather sleep was sought. It was especially the place for prayer and meditation, at evening and in the morning and at noontide.

"One is continually reminded of the custom of praying on the housetop when one comes into this country," says W. E. Curtis, in "Today in Syria," "for when the muezzin appears in the balcony of the minaret to call the hour of prayer, thousands of the faithful climb to their housetops, turn their faces toward Mecca, and go through the gymnastic performance which accompanies Mohammedan worship."

I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean, verse 14. The Romans called the Jews "Basket-carriers," because when traveling they had a basket, or wallet, slung from their shoulders in which they carried food. They did this to avoid eating certain kinds of food which were forbidden by their laws. Nor could they eat with a Gentile, for that would make them "unclean." "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you," says Shylock to Bassanio in one of Shakespeare's plays, and this has always been the spirit of strict Jews. A strict Jew today in our own country will not use soap in washing dishes because the fat of pigs has been used in making it, and for him a dish which has been washed by a Gentile must be rewashed by a Jew before it can be used.

The men stood before the gate and called, verse 17. They called to the porter, whose duty it was to tend the gate or door that led from the street through the arched entrance into the interior courtyard. The oriental house is usually directly on the street, and built around a courtyard. Had they entered instead of standing without and calling, they would have given great offense, for they were Gentiles. See verse 28.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

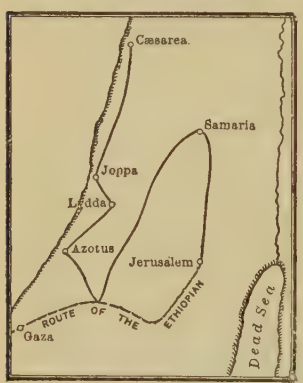
Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In the previous Quarter, what lessons did we learn about making the world Christian? What was the Golden Text for the lesson upon that topic?

Peter Combats his Jewish Prejudice against Gentiles. The first Christian leaders were all of them Jews and full of Jewish prejudices; they had been brought up to believe that it was with them alone that God had covenanted, and that the only way in which Gentiles could share their privileges and enter into covenant relationship with God was by being circumcised and becoming Jewish proselytes. They still held these ideas at the time of the events of our lesson. To the Jews of this time the Kingdom of God meant, in the expressive words of Glenn Frank, a religious monopoly with Judaism as the only stockholder.

They had not grasped the thought that Christ had died for all and that the new wine of Christianity could not be kept in the old bottles of Judaism. It was necessary that these Jewish leaders at Jerusalem should throw over their prejudices, and be converted to a larger vision and freer faith. Last week we saw how Peter put away his fear; today we see him putting away his prejudices.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Peter was at *Joppa* when he had his vision. Joppa was the seaport of Jerusalem, thirty miles away on the Maritine Plain. Its modern name is Jaffa. Next to Jerusalem it was the most Jewish town in all Judea, the least under Greek influence. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was, as George Adam Smith says, infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. "To Jewish Joppa Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law."



Peter's Journeys

Cæsarea, the home of Cornelius, was a seaport thirty miles north of Joppa. It was the capital of the Roman province of Judæa, and the headquarters of the governor, or procurator as he was called, and of the Roman troops.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The vision on the housetop at Joppa was repeated over and over again. Some pupils can stand a great deal of repetition, especially pupils like Simon Peter.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW THE GOSPEL OVERCOMES RACE PREJUDICE

Beginning the Lesson. Peter tarried at Joppa with Simon the tanner. We know how great was Jewish prejudice against tanners. They were not allowed to carry on their business within fifty cubits of a town, their occupation made them Levitically "unclean," and yet Peter had spent several days in a tanner's home at the time of his vision on the housetop. This fact proves that there was working in his mind the lesson of liberal-mindedness which would soon allow him to hail all men as brothers. Oliver Wendell Holmes says that the mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye—the more light you pour upon it, the more it contracts. Peter was not a bigot. How did he receive more light?

The Advance of Christianity into the Gentile World. Paul is given credit for the advance of Christianity into the Gentile world, and Paul is entitled to credit. We must not forget, however, that in so radical a forward movement as that of preaching to the Gentiles the first steps are hardest, and Peter was the leader among those who took those hard first steps. Of course Peter had the help of a dream divinely sent, but the dream seems to have come to Peter because he was Peter, because the dream answered the questions he was already asking himself, and because

he could be counted on to follow the vision. In any case, Peter immediately drew a far-reaching, practical conclusion.

When Peter went to Antioch (Acts 10) and found that, under the preaching of the risen Christ, men among the heathen had responded, had passed out of darkness into light, had left their idols and were worshiping the God of Christ, he had but one word: "Take them into the church." "What about the old Jewish requirements?" "Never mind the requirements; take them in."

Peter's speech at Jerusalem (Acts 11) is one of the great charters of Christian liberty: "God gave to the Gentiles the Holy Spirit—even as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." Every word of this is the plain man's appeal to fact, an appeal which has arisen out of actual application of the Gospel to Gentile groups. Having seen God at Antioch, Peter drew the sensible but radical conclusion that God was not limited to Jerusalem.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century, by Francis J. McConnell.

The Art of Living Together. A motto which Dean Inge gave the other day is a wise one: "Personalize your sympathies and depersonalize your antipathies." This is the only way, he tells us, in which to Christianize the spirit of partisanship, which is one of the most pestilent parts of our inheritance from a very remote past.

From another British prelate, Arch-deacon Fotheringham, comes equally wise counsel:—

"Unless the world learns the art of living together, the world is not going to get anywhere either in its thinking or in its doing. Where there is the will to dominate on the part of the individual or the nation, it is impossible for people to live together in the right way. Similarly, there is the spirit of self-determination, than which there is no more destructive agent. When each people or each nation takes unto itself the power to live as an isolated self-determined unit—in that way lies madness; it is but the wedge that will split asunder and destroy the whole world.

"Unless the different colors and races learn the art of living together, there is a grave possibility of war, far more terrific than the Great War. If we are to have one goal for one world, then we must have that goal such that every part of the world will be working toward it. When we talk of the white race and all its great achievements, we must remember what the rest of the world has done, that there was a great Chinese nation before we had clothes, and that Japan was a power long before there ever was the Christian religion. We must try to see the best in each other, and not the worst; we must discover the plan of open diplomacy and of meeting together to discuss our differences. There will be sharp differences at first, of course, but out of those will come the art of living together. When we see that in making a world we need the idea of this race, the note of that race, the color of another race, and the civilization of still another race, that we need all to make up the picture, then, and then only, shall we have learned the art, the divine art, of living together."

So This is Christianity! It is the fashion, in church gatherings, to speak and resolve in these days about the necessity of solving racial problems in the spirit of Christ. But few have as yet any conception of the multiform ramifications of the racial question, nor of the infinite number of problems that will grow out of any effort to deal vigorously with it.

There is a little book entitled "And Who Is My Neighbor?" which consists briefly of the telling of one hundred and seventy-eight incidents taken from American life. Here are a few of them:—

A professional visitor found a young married woman, a Russian Jewess, living in a quarter largely inhabited by Gentiles. The girl was desperately lonely, and about to become a mother. The visitor advised her, in case of sudden need, to ask one of her neighbors to telephone for help. "There isn't any one to call," she answered. "All the people who live around here are Christians."

A colored man from the north was convalescing in a hospital in a southern city. Allowed to go for a short walk, he passed slowly along the street, steadying himself by holding the fence. As a white man passed he unintentionally and lightly brushed against his coat. The colored man took off his hat, bowed and exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, sir!" The white man vehemently cursed him. Southern Negroes assured him that there would have been no trouble if, instead of using the correct social form, he had said, " 'Scuse me, boss, 'scuse me!"

An Italian was thrown into jail, charged with murder. He denied the charge,

and was terribly beaten by the police. After two nights of such beating he was found hanging in his cell, and suicide was reported. The public health commissioner said when examinging the body that the man had been beaten to death. Nothing was done about it; the man's wife and child were left in destitution.

A Negro physician, after complete training, returned to the town in which he had grown up and began practice among his own race. The other medical men in the town told him to leave, and he felt that he had no alternative but to go.

A group of Japanese, members of the Presbyterian church, desired to build a church in a California city. The city building department was influenced not to grant a permit. At a mass meeting circulars were distributed which read: "You sent your children to our schools; we stood for it. You opened up your fruit stands; we stood for it. Now you want to build a church, and we will not stand for it."

A young Chinese studying in this country felt moved to write this prayer: "Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, thou hast made the earth and the people thereon, white, yellow, red or black, at thy will, and they are all good in thy sight. I beseech thee to comfort me when I feel like a stranger here; help me to endure persecution and scorn; give me wisdom that I may understand that peoples of whatever complexion are all thy children and thou art their Father and Creator."

So this is Christianity!—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century.

Bringing Internationalism Down to Earth. In the old University town of Prague there are twenty-three thousand students of more than twenty nationalities. To any one who knows Europe the opportunity for experimentation in Christian internationalism in such a field is at once apparent. To most Europeans before 1920, however, the idea of any such experimentation would not have occurred, and if it had it would have been put aside as fantastic. In fact, that is what people called the idea of a social center that should serve as a meeting place in Prague for students of all nationalities when first the American Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association representatives suggested it. And there were good grounds for this position. In America, with foreign-born citizens of the most diverse nationalities living in harmony in every great city, it is very difficult to realize the walls of hatred and jealousy and prejudice which divide neighbors in Europe.

When the plans were made, and it was proposed to have this great student club managed by a board of the students themselves, each nationality electing its delegates, people in Europe said, "It is impossible." Why, that would mean getting Germans and Jews, Czechs and Hungarians, Poles and Ukrainians, together at one council table! You would have a fist fight every meeting. They would either refuse to speak to one another, or they would fly at each other's throats. It was a delightful, idealistic scheme, which only Americans could devise.

But the Americans went ahead to build, aided by the encouragement and counsel of some of the wisest heads in the Czech government, and five years ago the *Studentsky Domov*, or Students' Home, was opened in Prague. Its purpose may perhaps be best described as a combination of the functions of the student unions and the Young Men's or Young Women's Christian Association on an average American university campus. The chief differences were in the vastly greater need in a European university town for such material privileges as those institutions offer, and the compelling need for some kind of practical internationalism. The successful meeting of both these needs makes *Studentsky Domov* unique in the student life of the world.

To any one who realizes what a distinct caste the students of a European country form, and how the ranks of government officials are recruited almost exclusively from among graduates of the universities, the future importance of what *Studentsky Domov* is now doing is at once evident. To students who through three or four years of their university life have sat around a council table in joint efforts with the students of other nationalities for the common good of all, the notion of international friendship is not a mere theory. If some of the student leaders of *Studentsky Domov* today shall later take their places in the councils of Czechoslovakia or Austria, they will carry with them the experience of student years in practical brotherhood and international coöperation.—Condensed from an Article in The Adult Bible Class Monthly, by Donald A. Lowrie.

For Discussion. 1. How to overcome prejudice against another. To render a service to any one is the highest remedy for prejudice against him, Dr. Lyman Abbott declared.

2. Gentile prejudice against the Jews. "Strangely enough, the problem of the Jew

today is not his prejudice against the rest of the world. It is the rest of the world's prejudice against him. The bigotry of men who call themselves Christians in dealing with Jews is one of the sad, dark pages of human history."

3. Racial prejudice. Our racial problems on the Pacific and in the South. The Ku Klux Klan. See Chapter VI of Christianity and the Rising Tide of Color; Basil Matthew's Clash of Color.

4. The importance of the right attitude in the home. "If the home atmosphere is heavy with class distinctions, contempt of others (especially of the poor), exclusiveness and pride, the children will think that is the correct thing, and they will go out into the world laden with these ruinous moral principles, which destroy the country as well as the individual."—R. F. Horton.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was not James spared as well as Peter? 2. How do you explain our Golden Text? 3. Have God's purposes always been secured through deliverances? 4. Is united prayer a power? 5. Does it always avail? 6. Why? 7. Are you growing in your prayer life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TAKING THE GOSPEL TO ALL RACES

Beginning the Lesson. In the times which we are studying, a Jew obeyed certain laws which other people did not. The people who did not keep those laws were Gentiles. The Jew was very particular about the kind of food he ate, and how it was prepared. He would never touch bacon or ham or any part of the flesh of a pig. He would not go into a Gentile's house nor eat with him. When Jesus told Peter and the rest to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, they thought he meant to bring the good news to all the Jews throughout the world; they did not dream that he meant to bring it to the Gentiles as well. Today we learn how Peter found out what his Master meant.

Peter was very exclusive. He was a Jew, and the Jews had their own laws and their own religion, and they did not want to share their religion with any other people. Exclusive Peter lay sleeping on the roof of Simon's house at Joppa during the heat of the day, and God sent him a vision. What was it?

While Peter was thinking about the meaning of his vision, three men came and asked for him. They were dusty and tired, as if they had come from a long distance. One of them was a centurion, or captain. What was his name? Cornelius was a man of good position and used to authority. He was already almost a Christian, for by prayer and works of faith he had been made ready for Peter's mission. He, too, had had a vision: what was it?

And Peter was ready for Cornelius. His vision had rebuked his Jewish pride and prejudices and narrow views and had made him ready for the task that awaited him at the home of Cornelius to which he went with the three men. What did he tell those Gentiles?

What Peter Learned. Cornelius found Christ, and so did the friends and neighbors whom he had invited to hear Peter. And Peter gained something out of that visit, too. He gained a new view, a broader outlook, a new conception of the gospel of Christ. He saw better what that vision on the housetop meant. "Of a truth," he said—what are the rest of the words? That God is the Father of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, black or white or yellow or brown, was the lesson Peter learned. Peter was not the only one who found that in helping another he helped himself; one never gives light to another without getting more light for self.

So this is the way that the story of Jesus began to be carried to all parts of the world. The eunuch whom Philip taught carried it to Africa, Cornelius whom Peter taught carried it to Italy, and groups of Christ's followers were soon to be found in far distant places.

Prejudice is Senseless. A prominent lawyer in New Orleans, who died recently, was no less noted for his tolerance than for his legal knowledge. To a friend who once happened to express wonder that this trait was so highly developed in him, he said:

"If I have a charitable temper, I owe it to a chance remark of an old uncle of mine when I was a boy. He saw me one day torturing a frog, and said, meditatively:

'Now I wonder why you do that? You are kind to dogs, birds and rabbits.' I replied that the frog was hideous, filthy and useless.

"'Yes, perhaps so,' he said, in the same reflective tone. 'It belongs to a different family from you. It has not the hereditary traits of the dog, the rabbit or the man. But it is not a trait of a frog to fight or despise another creature because it is not like itself. That is the mean, senseless vice of a man.'

A Centurion

"I thought over the remark for a long time, trying to understand exactly what he meant by it. After that day I never threw a stone at a frog: and I learned to apply his meaning to the men and women around me."

The girl who at school thinks and talks from another point of view than yours is not to be despised or ridiculed or disliked. She has been placed by God in another family. So has the man of another religion or political creed, who crosses your path in after life, or the foreigner, or the woman whose skin is yellow or red or black, while yours is white.

Each of them knows his own standing ground, his own blessings and temptations, his own duty to God and his fellows. To his own master he stands or falls. It is for you always to help, but never to judge him.—The Youth's Companion.

Provincialism. What holds back the coming of human brotherhood is the provincial mind. All false pride of caste and class and rank, of race and nation, is privincialism, and provincialism is simply self-infatuation in one of its most deadly forms. The Hottentots call themselves "the men of men"; the Eskimos call themselves "the complete people," but their neighbors the Indians are "louse-eggs"; the Haytian aborigines believed their island was the first of all created things; to the Japanese Nippon was the middle point of the world; and the Shah of Persia yet retains the title, "The Center of the Universe." That is provincialism. When Americans or British or Frenchmen talk in the same spirit, it is provincialism still.

This does not mean that a man should not love his own people best of all. A man should love his own people as his own mother, with a unique devotion. But he is a poor son whose sonship does not make him desire to serve all men's mothers. He is a poor patriot whose patriotism does not enable him to understand how all men everywhere feel about their altars and their hearthstones, their flags and their fatherland. He must rise above racial prejudices and animosities, above the scorn that embitters the color line, above the petty pride that is contemptuous of strange customs, strange clothes. He must learn to say *our* in world-wide sympathy and good will, or else he ought to forego the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven."—Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

Sentence Sermons. Christ wishes us to rise above all the divisions of color, race, creed and class, and to be kindly to our kind.—James Wells.

God of justice, save the people
From the war of race and creed,
From the strife of class and faction,
Make our nation free indeed.—Dr. Merrill.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Herod wish to kill Peter? 2. Why did he wait till the Passover was ended? 3. What put an end to Herod's persecutions, as told in Acts 12.20-23? 3. For what is it right to pray? 4. In what spirit should one pray? 5. What did his friends do for Peter? 6. Does prayer always save one from trouble? 7. Why?

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

GOLDEN TEXT: Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But Jehovah delivereth him out of them all. Psalm 34.19.

LESSON Acts 12.1-17 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

ACTS 12.5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. 13. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER IMPRISONED, verses 1-4. Peter, James and John were the three prominent men among the apostles, and Herod Agrippa I began his persecution of the followers of Christ by having James beheaded. Finding that this act greatly pleased the Jews, he selected Peter as his next victim and had him imprisoned to await his execution after the close of the Passover. Executions were not carried out during the Passover, and Herod was nominally a Jew and most careful in all Jewish observances. Peter was guarded in prison by four quarternions of soldiers, four sets of men, one set for each watch, two of whom were chained to Peter in his cell, and two were on guard outside, verse 6.

"When a man finds that a certain course of conduct is receiving popular applause he is led on to further excesses. A public speaker descends to a coarse and vulgar jest, and because it pleases the baser sort in the audience, and the speaker is awarded a round of applause, he is prone to descend to still farther depths of degradation" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

II. PETER'S DELIVERANCE, verses 5-11. Peter was in prison, but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

"I wish I could burn these two words, unto God, into every heart, so that whenever we pray, in public or in private, they would stand right before us; and that before we prayed a syllable of prayer we would be sure every time that we had really come into the presence of God and were actually talking to him" (R. A. Rorrey).

At night, shortly before he would have been brought forth for trial and death, help came. "There is the enemy plotting, there are the friends praying; and the man himself around whom all the menace and the intercession are gathering has shut his eyes and quieted himself to slumber, because there, too, is he who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. God is there in the palace, there in the house of prayer, there in the prison, keeping all the threads of the drama in his own hands; holding the tyrants' power in derision, hearing the prayer that ascends to his holy habitation, responding to the trust of his child, whom he is lulling to sleep. And now it is his time to work. The final act is ready to be launched upon the stage. The moment of deliverance is appointed, and already its messenger and instrument is on the wind to

loose him that is appointed unto death. How well may Peter sleep when God is watching over his bed and preparing his awaking!" (Robert Law).

The circumstances of Peter's escape are told very minutely—the coming of the angel (the word *angel* means *messenger*), the light in the cell that awakened Peter, the brief words to make haste, the falling off of the chains, the girding and putting on of sandals and outer cloak, the command to follow, the passing of the first and the second guard, the opening of the outer gates of the prison leading into the city, the going out and passing through one street, and then the being left alone.

"Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still" (Helen Hunt Jackson).

Peter was dazed and thought his experience unreal until he "came to himself" and said, "The Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod." One thing is certain, whoever delivers us from a great peril will always seem to us an angel. "There are no bolts and there are no bars which can withstand the purposes of God."

"God hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own when it has come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay God's part on him, and leave it there; duties are ours, events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth forth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, 'How wilt thou do this or that?' we lose ground. We have nothing to do there, it is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office and steer his own helm" (Samuel Rutherford).

III. INCREDULITY AND JOY OF THE DISCIPLES, verses 12-17. After some deliberation Peter went to the house of Mary, the other of John Mark (afterwards one of the Evangelists), where many of the disciples were met to pray for him. He knocked at the gateway that led through the house into the central courtyard (the presence of the gate shows that it was not a small home but a prosperous one), and the maid Rhoda came. She recognized Peter's voice, and in her wonder and joy left him standing there while she ran to tell the good news. "Thou art mad," they answered. "It is an angel," they also said. But Peter continued knocking and was finally admitted.

"How suggestive an incident! They are praying for an answer; the answer comes to the door; and it strikes them as incredible. Now, God's answer to our prayers ought not to surprise us into incredulity. God is good! God is faithful! The answer often comes knocking at the door but we won't let it in, and we never know that the answer has been given. We are in an unexpectant mood, and we have never suspected the wealth which the Lord would have left at our gate" (J. H. Jowett).

Peter quieted the tumult of surprise and joy, recounted to them how he had escaped, bade them tell James and the brethren, and then hastened from Jerusalem to a safe place.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, verse 6. "Soldiers act in the East in the capacity of policemen, their duties being similar to those of the French gendarmes, or armed police."

Bound with two chains, verse 6. It was the Roman custom to fasten a chain from the right wrist of a prisoner to the left wrist of a soldier. When extraordinary precautions were taken, as in the case of Peter, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side. Matthew Henry reminds us that tradition "makes a mighty rout about these chains," and claims that one of the soldiers kept them for a sacred relic, that they were long afterward presented to Eudoxia the Empress, and that many miracles were wrought by them. One of the Roman Catholic feast days (the first of August) is called *Festum Vinculorum Petri,* The Feast of Peter's Chains.

Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee, verse 8. Peter

had removed his sandals, which were only soles bound on his feet by leather straps or thongs, and had removed his girdle, which confined the folds of his long abba or outer garment. At night this woolen garment was thrown over the owner as a blanket, and therefore was to be returned if taken in pledge, Ex. 22.26, 27.

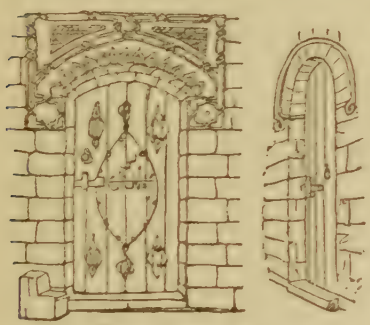
The iron gate that leadeth into the city, verse 10. The iron gate which led out upon the street from the prison court-yard would, of course, be strongly secured. Van Lennep, in Bible Lands, thus describes an oriental city gate to which the prison gate may have been somewhat similar. "The gates are large, massive, and two-leaved, built of heavy timber, plated with iron. A strong iron bar, hooked at one end, hangs from a heavy ring of the same metal, made fast in a strong post, built into the wall behind each fold of the gate. When the gate is closed, the hooks are set into other iron rings, on the back of its folds, enabling the gate to resist a very heavy pressure from without. The lock is massive and of wrought iron, and the long-handled, ponderous key is carried by the keeper of the gate in his belt, or hung from a nail in his little room close by."

A Prisoner Chained to Two Soldiers

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What incident first brought Peter into collision with the authorities? What did the latter content themselves with doing on that occasion? Why? When and why was Peter again imprisoned? Why was he freed? When had Peter seen his Master sleeping soundly in the midst of danger?

Herod Agrippa I, Persecutor. This Herod is the grandson of Herod the Great. Josephus calls him Agrippa the Great. He sought to gain the favor of the Jews by persecuting the new sect which the Jewish leaders hated. After Peter's escape from prison (our lesson today), he had the matter investigated and the guards put to death. He died from a terrible disease in 44 A.D., having ruled all Palestine for three years.



Oriental Street Doors

The Place of the Lesson. The location in Jerusalem of the prison where Peter was confined is not known, though many claim that it was the Tower of Antonia.

The Close of "The Acts of Peter." This lesson ends our study of the life of Peter. He lived twenty years longer, but we have only incidental allusions in The Acts to this latter part of his life. Next week we have an excerpt from one of his letters.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Recall our lesson about prayer in the preceding Quarter. By questions ascertain how much that you then taught has been remembered and put into practise by your pupils. Discuss today's Golden Text (see the Second Topic). Do not teach any conception of prayer which experience will not find true. Impress the truth that, whatever means God used in the event we are studying, his messengers today through whom he carries out his purposes are men and women like ourselves.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE POWER OF UNITED PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson. Herod Agrippa on the throne, Peter in prison—which is the stronger? Herod is the typical persecutor; Peter, the typical leader of the

church. Herod is the favorite of Rome and the popular idol of the Jewish people; Peter is alone, helpless, securely guarded by soldiers and chains in an inner prison. Herod has all the resources of the great Roman Empire back of him; Peter has back of him the prayers of the faithful company of followers of Jesus Christ. Which one is defeated? Why? To quote a line of Tennyson's, Peter's friends are

Battering at the gates of heaven with stones of prayer,

and their prayer prevails; Peter is freed.

The Power of the United Prayer Made for Peter. In such an emergency as this does not a prayer-meeting appear absurd? Perhaps there are many Christians who would regard it as legitimate and reasonable to pray for the quietness of Peter's spirit, that he might be kept in boldness of faith and in open communication with his Lord, but who would regard a prayer for his release as trespassing upon forbidden ground. Does not this timidity very frequently spoil the range of our petitions, and rob us of the promised inheritance? If the dominion of prayer is to be limited by the prison gates, we are reduced to a pitiful impoverishment.

I see no need to give our supplications the severe restrictions which many Christians impose. I would rather exercise a glorious liberty, and if Peter is in prison I would pray for the opening of the prison doors and for the apostle's bodily release.

"And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him." That was a great moving mission begotten by the ministry of prayer. I will not at the bidding of unbelief reduce the narrative to mere poetry and regard the incident as a commonplace event for which, if we knew everything, we could find a commonplace explanation. It is one of the profoundest beliefs in my own life that there was a vital connection between that prayer-meeting and the prison.—Condensed from The Silver Lining, by J. H. Jowett.

One Way of Thinking of Intercessory Prayer. "Our topic in the Bible Study Class this morning was intercessory prayer," said Margaret to her roommate. "Dr. Lawson spoke of it as if it were an essential part of the Christian's life, and the class seemed to take the same attitude. But I don't believe it. Do you, Evelyn?"

The older girl picked up a fallen leaf and studied its rich coloring before she answered, "Yes, under certain conditions. Why not?"

"It isn't reasonable!" protested Margaret. "If the relation between God and ourselves is really personal, like that of father and child, as Christ taught that it is, then why should any one need another to pray for him?"

"I felt that way about it until a year ago," Evelyn answered slowly. "And then, during those months when I was so desperately sick and the odds seemed all against me, I had a strange experience. I think I had always had a strong personal faith since childhood, and believed that nothing could rob me of it. But when the pain and fatigue of those long months had weakened and unnerved me, I little by little lost all my desire to live—all my interest in life. I am sure that I still believed passively that there is a God, and that he is an allwise and loving God; but I seemed to have lost all sense of personal communion with him—all real consciousness of his presence. Then one day Dr. Stanley called at the hospital to see me. He had always appealed to me as a college pastor, although I had never known him very well as a friend. I was too weak to say much, but he somehow grasped the fact that I was being swallowed up by the darkness; and before he left he knelt at my bedside without permission or apology and offered up a prayer that I shall never forget: it was so simple and fervent, so intimate—so powerful. As I lay there wonderingly,—just listening,—tears crept down my face, and that little sick room suddenly became a shrine. At least one of the meanings of intercession became very clear to me then. I was all out of tune with God and with life. So ever since that hour I have thought of earthly intercessors as tuners, whose sensitiveness to God's voice and contact with human hearts enables them to bring the two into harmony. I know it's not by any means a full answer to your questions, but it satisfied me."

The Law of Prayer and the Law of Harvest. Prayer is a force. When God created the universe of forces he made a place for the play of the prayer-force. This force is not an intruder, or upstart. It is at home in human life. A kingdom was provided for it from the foundation of the world. It does not annihilate other forces, nor act independently of them. It coöperates with other forces for the securing of desired ends. According to the New Testament all answers to prayer are conditioned. These conditions are fixed and can no more be changed than can

the conditions which the chemist deals with in his laboratory. The law of prayer is as sacred and eternal as the law of gravitation. Laws cannot be suspended by the repetition of pious formulas. There is a harvest law in the physical world, and there is a harvest law in the world of the soul. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. This law cannot be abrogated by prayer. A man who indulges to excess in alcoholic liquors for twenty years cannot by an earnest prayer change in an hour or a day the processes which have been started in his blood and body. What he has sown he must reap. You cannot change the law of gravitation by a prayer. The man who drives his automobile over a precipice goes to the bottom no matter how many prayers may be offered by the horrified onlookers. The man who sows his field with tares cannot change those tares into roses by offering up a series of Paternosters. You cannot set a great city blazing and then stop the conflagration by falling on your knees. This is a truth which was forgotten by the enthusiastic persons who thought that the war could have been checked at the beginning, if only groups of believing souls had prayed. You cannot abrogate the law of the harvest by your supplications. There is a law of prayer and there is a law of the harvest, and the first cannot annihilate or suspend the latter.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by C. E. Jefferson.

Public Prayer. If the man who offers prayer in public has a good flow of language it is possible for him to keep it up for twenty-five or thirty minutes on occasion. Any man of pious habit can shut his eyes and talk indefinitely. And it is possible for people to keep their heads down and their eyes closed during the whole of that far-flung and long-drawn-out utterance. It might not be profitable, however, to inquire too closely into their thoughts during the whole of that period or into the ability of the man himself to maintain unbrokenly for all that time the sense of direct address to God. The real height of a prayer in its outward, upward, Godward reach is not always in direct proportion to its length.

I have been in the active ministry for thirty years and I know of no human exercise so difficult and so exacting, which so takes it out of a man, as the act of prayer in the presence of one's fellows. If a man can take upon his own heart in sympathetic fashion the needs of those for whom he would pray and carry them up by his own vital faith into the presence of God with a genuine and sustained sense of the august nature of what he is doing and keep it up for five or six minutes he has done well. The moment he loses that sense of sympathetic, horizontal touch with the needs of his fellows and the vital sense of a perpendicular hold upon God, he would better say "Amen" and stop.—Charles R. Brown, in The Religion of a Layman.

The Adult Class and the Cottage Prayer Meeting. Two clergymen were comparing notes. One said to the other: "My parish has become a huge prayer meeting, and every activity and interest of the church feels the beneficent effects."

"And how did it happen?" asked the other.

Quickly came the reply, "It did not happen; it was planned by the two Adult Classes of my Sunday-school. They began to hold cottage meetings a few weeks ago at various outer points, and now the entire parish is swept by the contagion of the movement."

Such a campaign of Christian service may be undertaken anywhere, either by a class or a group of classes, and ought to commend itself to all thoughtful men and women of the Church school. The effort should not be forced. Where there is a wide-awake social consciousness in the Adult Class, the effort will be made naturally and without noise of trumpet. Are you willing to be the first person to volunteer? Then be sure of this—another will volunteer his services. By that time you are prepared to go ahead. A timely suggestion to the committee on social service and evangelization of the class will make the matter public property, and the movement is substantially on foot. After that, the momentum gained will make the movement irresistible.—C. W. Laufer, in Adult Bible Class Magazine.

For Discussion. Answered prayers. See Quiet Talks on Prayer by S. D. Gordon; The Meaning of Prayer by H. E. Fosdick; Lecture III in Old Truths and New Facts, by C. E. Jefferson.

"If you and I are praying exactly on the lines that we did when we were ten, it means that we have grown up in a great many things, but that we are atrophied in religion."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To whom did Peter write his First Epistle? 2. What was his purpose in writing it? 3. Why did Peter address his readers as "sojourners and pilgrims"? 4. What was the meaning of the first clause of 4.3? 5. What does Peter teach about good ciitzenship? 6. Is one a good citizen who violates any law? 7. Is the Eighteenth Amendment enforced in your town? 8. If it is not, what should you do in the matter?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW DOES GOD DELIVER US?

Beginning the Lesson. "Have you heard the news?" whispered one white-faced Christian to another, as a little band gathered in the house of John Mark in Jerusalem. "James, the brother of John, has been beheaded!" So they told each other, and wept. Some brought a strange story of how the man who arrested him was so impressed at his courage and joy, that he, too, believed in Jesus and was beheaded with James. But nobody knew very much about it. King Herod's officers had worked secretly and quickly.

It pleased the Jews. At last Herod had found a way to stop the scowls and whispers of the Jews. What did he care for a band of hated people who followed one Jesus? He would kill them all without fear!

So, next, Herod's officers had orders to seize the most powerful of the hated people. Who was that? It was the Passover, and the festivities must be completed, so Peter was put in prison. Tomorrow—that is what Herod said as he saw the crowds in the temple—they should have a notable prisoner to mock tomorrow. That is what the Jewish leaders said as they looked at the great iron gate that kept Peter safe. That is what the disciples said as they sat up all night to pray. That is what Peter's guards told him as he lay down to sleep chained to two soldiers. But the truly wonderful thing did not wait till tomorrow. What is the story?. —Emily Huntley, in Sunday School Chronicle.

Does Prayer always Deliver Us? Do you not think that the disciples prayed that the life of James might be spared? And yet James was put to death. Were not prayers offered for the lives of most of our boys who fell in France? Were they not sincere prayers? Were they not right prayers? Why were not the lives of all those brave soldiers spared?

In a single sentence the apostle John gives the condition which must be fulfilled if our prayers are to prevail with God. "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The church did not know that it was the will of God that Peter should not at this time, like Stephen and James, suffer a martyr's death, but they prayed earnestly, nevertheless, that Peter's life might be spared. They must have prayed submissively, asking only that their prayers be granted if it were God's will. What did Jesus mean when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"? He did not mean that we have a claim on God which he is bound to acknowledge if we ask it. He meant that whatever we ask in the name and in the spirit of Jesus himself, whatever, therefore is in accordance with the divine will, will be granted us. Our prayer will be answered in our way, if it is the right way, but if it is not, then in God's own way; as Whittier beautifully says:

> All as God wills, who wisely heeds
> To give or to withhold,
> And knoweth more of all my needs
> Than all my prayers have told!

Our Golden Text. The Psalms are full of expressions of confidence in God as our refuge and help. You know how beautifully the Twenty-third Psalm voices the sense of the presence of God in time of trouble. It is grandly true that God is our Helper at all times. But when the Psalmist in our Golden Text declares that God delivers the righteous out of all his afflictions, we know this does not mean that God removes all trouble from the pathway of the good. If there are troubles to be borne God delivers, not by removing the troubles, but by giving strength to bear them. "They that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength," cries Isaiah; and again, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength," that is, in patient

trust and reliance on God will come the strength to bear, which is, in truth, a deliverance.

And we must not forget that God expects us to do our part toward helping ourselves. A woman in speaking of a neighbor who had just died, said: "The trouble with him was that he was always sort o' trustin' to luck that things would come out right and then, when they didn't, layin' it off on Providence. He was a good soul. But just the same it was a failin'—this everlastin'ly expectin' the Lord to do everything, without doin' so much as a hand's turn on his own account."

Football and Prayer. In Association Men, there is a report of an interview with Edgar W. Garbisch, a noted football player and tennis star of the class of 1925 at West Point, in which he tells how he went to the football coaches at West Point and asked for their cooperation in putting into practise his theories of prayer and clean sportsmanship. The first time the team prayed together was before a game with Yale.

"It was a mighty sight to see those boys," he said. "They all tore off their headguards; Protestants, Catholics, and others. We joined together in a little circle. I don't know exactly what I prayed, but it wasn't for victory. It was simply that we asked God to permit us to go into action with a clean heart, acquit ourselves like men, give our best all the time, and maintain a Christian attitude throughout the game. Then we turned and ran out on the field. We prayed before every game after that. And there wasn't a single penalty all season for unsportsmanlike play. Nor did I at any time during the season hear cursing or obscene language used by any member of the team."

A Prayer List. "We need your prayers," was the closing sentence of a letter to the pupils of a Sunday-school from their missionary, a young man who had gone to China from their own school. This letter was read aloud in all the Departments of the school.

"Why can't we pray for them?" asked one of the girls.

"Why—there's millions of them," exclaimed one of the boys.

Then they worked out their prayer list. Their missionary from China had spoken of a boy and a girl, called them by name, in whom he was specially interested and about whom they might like to know. These should start the list. Then they would get the names of a boy and girl in each mission country, and pray for them each day—the boys for the boy in each land, the girls for the girl in each country, calling each by name.

Of course it took some time to get these names, but the children began to pray for the children in China. Soon they had a boy and a girl in India, then in Burma. How much more value it gave to prayer to have something definite to ask for others! How much closer God seemed to them! Actually he was their loving Father. They had never realized it before. And Christ seemed almost with them as they asked, in his name, blessings on his other children.

Of course, after keeping these children so close in prayer, the next thing was to wish actually to help them. One child needed pictures; another would have no gift for Christmas; another must drop out of school for lack of a paltry five dollars a quarter.

Why could they not send gifts to each of these? It was such a happy thought! They could and would and did earn money to keep three of their prayer list in the mission schools. They sent a box of pictures to another. They found desirable and appropriate gifts for the others.

Then, for their own Christmas, there came pictures for the Department, of all the boys and girls on their prayer list. Two, the boy in China, the girl in India, had given themselves to Christ. "Keep on praying for them, please," wrote the missionaries.—Willametta Preston, in The Westminster Teacher.

Sentence Sermons. God's angels open locks as easily as his sunbeams open rosebuds.—Bishop Warren.

No kindness shown in act is so important and so essential a part of friendship as prayer for our friend.—J. R. Miller.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we know about the last years of Peter's life? 2. What does Peter say in our selection from his Epistle about obeying the law? 3. Why was the Eighteenth Amendment added to our Constitution? 4. Why should the law be obeyed?

PETER TEACHES GOOD CITIZENSHIP (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Romans 13.10

LESSON 1 Peter 2.11-17; 4.1-5 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 146.5-10

1 Peter 2.11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

4.1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries: 4 wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: 5 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SEEMLY LIFE, 2.11, 12. "Beloved, I beeseech you as sojourners and pilgrims"—thus Peter addresses his readers. Peter is here speaking metaphorically; he wishes them to realize that life is a journey, not a goal, and that the attainment of character which is eternal should be their aim; they were living, as it were, in exile on earth, heaven was their true home.

"The Christian looks for a life eternal. In comparison thereof the best things of this time are of little account. It is but as a lodging for a brief night, and at dawn the traveler sets forward for his true home."

Since they had but a short time to stay on earth, they must live their brief life nobly. "I beseech you to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," are Peter's words.

"Do not let us so narrow its interpretation that the majority of us escape the grip of the apostle's injunction. Let us attribute a comprehensive content to the unwelcome word 'lust.' 'Lust' includes the entire army of unclean forces which are antagonistic to the exalted realm of the spirit. It includes not only the carnal desire, but the jealous eye and the itching palm. Fleshly lust is everything in the life which steams the windows of the spirit. Fleshly lust is therefore inclusive of envy, jealousy, avarice, insatiable selfishness, and inordinate ambition" (J. H. Jowett).

"Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." How like an echo from the Sermon on the Mount this seems! "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good work, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." "So Christ's pilgrim leaves a track of light behind him: he is a witness. The phrase 'in the day of visitation' suggests a fear in the apostle's heart lest the response to this witness might not be immediate: it might have to bide Christ's own time. The hour of visitation which will also be the hour of illumination will come, and then all the quiet witness will tell—the holy walk, the patient endurance, the lofty testimony, the life that is fair to see" (J. M. E. Ross).

"It is evident from various phrases in the letter that a good deal of mud throwing had been going on. It has ever been the part of the machinery of persecution to start wild rumors and scatter slanders. Modern missionary literature is full of illustrations of this. These things cannot be argued down. They must be lived down. And the Christian character did

T. König

PETER

almost as much as the contents of the Christian gospel to turn the tide and lay the foundations of Christendom" (J. M. E. Ross).

II. GOOD CITIZENSHIP, 2.13-16. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." By "every ordinance of man" is meant every human institution established by man for man's welfare. And the reason Peter gives is "for the Lord's sake"; "Because Jesus said, 'Render what is Cæsar's to Cæsar,' or, generally, because God is the source of all duly-constituted authority; or because your loyalty redounds to the credit of your Master in heaven." "Whether," Peter explains, "to the king, as supreme (the Roman emperor); or unto governors (of Roman provinces) as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well." "This implies that the governors are sent by God acting through the emperor. The ruler executes God's vengeance (Rom. 12.19), and voices God's approval (Ps. 22.25)" (Expositor's Greek Testament). So Paul in writing to the Romans counsels every one to obey "the higher powers"—those in authority, the civil rulers—and declares that the fact of the authority's being established argues that it was ordained of God.

"Loyalty to rulers is to me an essential branch of religion" (John Wesley).

"For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." "Peter, writing in all probability from the Roman church, urges submission to Nero and the provincial governors because ignorant and foolish men were beginning to misrepresent the Christian church as a kind of Internationalist or Socialist conspiracy" (A. J. Mason).

"A Christian is one who clearly recognizes the necessity of social order. The ultimate purpose of redemption is to make an orderly family out of a disorderly race. The Christian will not stand aloof from his fellows. He will recognize the hallowedness of social fellowships, and he will strongly accept his social obligations. He will bend himself to the discharge of civic duties, and put his shoulder beneath the responsible burden of national life. If this be evangelistic character, the character that tells upon "the Gentiles," then Christian life is not perfected and beautified where the hallowing of the social order is ignored. When civic duty is neglected, and national obligation is overlooked, the fair circle of spiritual devotion is broken. I have no personal doubt as to what we should do with kings and governors if their rule ministers to moral chaos and disorder. The sovereignty is only hallowed when it works to hallowed ends" (J. H. Jowett).

We are responsible for our use of freedom. Christians are free, and therefore must submit to authority. No freedom should become license. They must not use their freedom to hide wrong-doing, but being servants of God, they must be good subjects, for that is God's will. "The Christian took up a position of complete independence within, and professed himself in a certain sense to be above the laws, by virtue of being a member of Christ's Kingdom. This position the heathen state resented, and looked on the Christian church as a dangerous organization. Here Peter both insists upon and defines that independent position" (A. J. Mason).

"Every liberty is under the dominion of a fine restraint. Freedom of thought! 'Use your freedom as the bondservants of God.' No man has a right to think as he likes. No man has a right to think about the unworthy, or to contemplate the unclean. Freedom of speech! 'Use your freedom as the bondservants of God.' Exercise it with severe restrictions. In all these freedoms the element of responsibility is the saving salt, and sometimes the element of responsibility will cause the freedom to be unused. If a man resign his freedom to take intoxicating drink that he may the better minister to an imperiled brother, I cannot but think that in reality he is no bondslave, but the Lord's free man" (J. H. Jowett).

"Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king," Peter counsels. "Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor," wrote Paul.

III. THE NEW LIFE IMPLIES DEATH TO THE OLD, 4.1-4. "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh (during his earthly life), arm yourself also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." "One dead—literally or spiritually—hath rest in respect of sin's assumed or committed; so Heb. 9.28" (Expositor's Greek Testament). The purpose of arming one's self with

the mind of Christ is that during the remainder of one's life on earth one may renounce the lusts of men and may live in accordance with the will of God.

"From the contemplation of the Master's sufferings in the flesh the apostle now turns the minds of his readers to the contemplation of their own yesterdays, if perchance they may find in the retrospect an added force to constrain them to a life of triumphant suffering. He has sought to allure them to exalted, spiritual living by the example of the Lord; now he will seek to drive them into the same lofty tendency by causing them to dwell upon their own loathsome and appalling past. The repulsion obtained from our yesterdays will give impetus to the inclination to live to the will of God today" (J. H. Jowett).

In sad irony Peter affirms that his readers had given a sufficient amount of time in times past to evils that were characteristic of the Gentiles.

"If a man turn his face to the past, the burden of his yesterdays may crush out of his heart a prayer which is more a moaning cry than an articulate speech.

'I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.'

'Remember not past years!' That is the cry of an aching and broken heart. The retrospect made him a humble and wrestling suppliant. That is the motive of the apostle in reminding his readers of 'the times past' in their lives. 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies' " (J. H. Jowett).

The remaining time should belong to God. "Sufficient unto the day that is past, its evils." The appalling list of evils of the past which Peter enumerates cover sensual immorality, drinking and carousing, and idolatry.

"As wealth has increased, and so-called civilization has diffused material comforts, senseless luxury, gluttony, drunkenness, and still baser fleshly sins have become more flagrantly common in society which is not distinctively and earnestly Christian; and there was never more need than there is today for Christians to carry aloft the flag of self-control and temperance in all things belonging to 'the flesh' " (Alexander Maclaren).

Because you once lived as they still do, the Gentiles think it strange that you do not continue so to live, and they speak evil of you. They attribute your restraint to evil motives. "The hiding of your benevolence will be interpreted as stinginess; its expression will be regarded as self-advertisement. Your self-denial will be explained as a cloak that conceals a deeper covetousness. Just go on! In the face of it all, just calmly persist."

You shall give account of your life to him that is to judge the living and the dead. "The thought of Christ as Judge should both silence the blasphemers and strengthen the blasphemed to endure. That judgment will indicate the wisdom of those who sowed to the spirit and the folly of those who sowed the flesh. The one will reap corruption; the other, life everlasting" (Alexander Maclaren).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, verse 11. The Christians to whom Peter was writing believed, not merely that their own tenure of life was brief, but that the world itself was soon to pass away. They looked for a speedy coming of Christ. This belief in the approaching end might make many lax in their obedience to the civil authority, whose power, they thought, was soon to be broken.

I beseech you to abstain from fleshly lusts, verse 11. With good reason does Peter use most solemn words of entreaty. The peril at all times is great. The flesh warreth against the spirit. We cannot do the things that we would. But for these men the danger was extreme. Some of them had lived in surroundings where such sins were counted a part of religious duty; were sanctioned and indulged in by those of the convert's own blood.—Dr. J. Rawson Lumby.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did Jesus say he would make of Peter if he followed him? What were the last words of Jesus to Peter?

The Last Years of Peter's Life. After his escape from prison and rehearsal at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, of what had befallen him, we are told that Peter departed and went to another place. We next hear about Peter at the conference in Jerusalem when Paul and Barnabas and others from the church at Antioch appeared before the apostles and the elders in regard to the question whether Gentile Christians must keep the Mosaic law. Peter spoke in behalf of the Gentiles. "Brethren," he said, "ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the gospel, and believe . . . And God made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

There came a time when Paul resisted Peter to his face at Antioch, as Paul writes in the second chapter of Galatians. "For before that certain came from James," Paul explains. "Peter ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas (Peter) before them all, 'If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?'"

This rebuke for his inconsistent action is the last record which we have in the Bible about Peter. We do not know how the last years of his life were spent. It is inferred that with his wife (1 Cor. 9.5) he traveled throughout the regions of Asia Minor, because in his First Epistle he addresses familiarly the "sojourners of the Dispersion" there. The salutation at the close of this letter leads one to suppose that he remained for sometime in Rome (called Babylon, 5.13).

A Crown Presented to Peter and Paul

From the bottom of a glass cup found in the Catacombs at Rome

John 21.18, 19 indicates that he died a martyr's death, but how or when is not known. Tradition says that he was crucified in the last years of Nero's reign, and that at his own request, for he deemed himself unworthy to be crucified as was his Lord, he was nailed to the cross head downwards.

The First Epistle of Peter. Peter wrote his First Epistle to the Christians in the leading cities of Asia Minor, 1.1. It is generally believed that it was written from Rome (termed Babylon in 5.13), about the end of 63 or the beginning of 64 A.D.

It is a letter of advice and a message of hope. Peter's purpose in writing it was to confirm his readers in their faith, to comfort and encourage them in their troubles, and to advise them as to their conduct, especially in times of persecutions.

The letter has caught the spirit of Jesus. Throughout are echoes of familiar passages in the Gospels, and as we read them we feel almost certain that in Peter's mind as he wrote were the words which Jesus uttered.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Mr. Frederick W. Smith in an article in the Zion's Herald gives these pictures of Church schools on Temperance Sundays before and after the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment:—

"The most potent force which ultimately brought about the acceptance of the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution, was, without doubt, the education in temperance which the children of our nation began to receive systematically about a generation ago. This was the generation that brought to a climax the fight for prohibition. In the public schools, it had been taught the effect that alcohol had upon the human system, as part of the course of physiology and hygiene. In the Church schools, temperance lessons were studied with diligence. There were poster

exhibits picturing vividly the results of addiction to alcoholic beverages. Regularly, at least once a year, efforts were made to get every child in school to sign the pledge, promising abstinence from all forms of alcoholic liquors. The war was waged with a vengeance against the traffic in alcohol both in day schools and in Church schools. And then prohibition became the policy of our government.

"Today—well, just visit the classes on Temperance Sunday, or the day to be devoted to the temperance lesson! Either the teaching of the lesson is an absolute farce, resolving itself merely into a contented statement of well-worn platitudes concerning 'being temperate in all things,' or else we frequently hear, 'Today we have a temperance lesson. I thought, however, we might discuss such-and-such,' turning to a topic far remote from the content or aim of the lesson.

"No longer do we get any constructive teaching of the evils of intoxicating liquors. And where have the pledge cards gone? Isn't it worth while to sign the pledge any more? If you argue that it is not consistent to sign a pledge to abstain from that which we are not supposed to be able to get, then what is wrong with a pledge to observe the law of the land and to support its enforcement?"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD CITIZEN

Beginning the Lesson. What do we know about Peter's life after the event of our last lesson? (See The Historical Background.) To whom did Peter write the letter which we call The First Epistle of Peter? What was his purpose in writing it?

Calumnies were being circulated about the Christians in Asia Minor, and in our first selection from this letter Peter exhorts them to be most vigilant in their efforts to maintain a conduct strictly pure and strictly subordinate to those in authority. His words imply that their conduct was usually above reproach, but he appeals to them, as a commentator observes, to be on their guard in such matters, even as Leonidas might exhort Spartans going into battle not to flinch, or Nelson tell English sailors that "England expects every man to do his duty." He would have them known for their perfect conduct and good citizenship. What does he declare to be the duty of a Christian citizen?

A Good Citizen Abstains from Sins that War against the Soul. When the younger son was spending his substance in riotous living in the far country, he was "lost," Jesus says. It was his soul that was lost. He had no soul left, so to speak. A course of selfishness and sin had eaten it up and destroyed it. And that is always the result of a life of selfish and sensual pleasure. It dries up and destroys the soul. It empties a man of high feeling, noble aspiration and holy ambition. It dehumanizes him, it brutalizes him. It leaves him insensible to high appeal. It puts the mark of the beast on his very face. You remember that terrible sequence which Pauls sets forth in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans—a "refusal to have God in their knowledge," . . . "vile passions," . . . a "reprobate mind": The repudiation of God, a life of sinful pleasure, a reprobate mind, a callous heart, a dead soul. And we see this tragic sequence in many a life. A course of selfish and sinful pleasure is the destruction of honor and truth and faith and fame.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

A Good Citizen Obeys the Law which Prevents Wine-bibbings, Revelings, Carousings. Private beliefs about the prohibition law are irrelevant. The salient fact is that a larger number of people, many of them avowedly of the criminal class, are openly challenging the power of the government to cause a law to be obeyed. When that situation arises there is but one way to meet it. The officials set for the maintenance of the law must make their authority respected at all hazards. When men defiantly allege that a particular law cannot be made to apply to them, mayors, governors, and presidents are bound to assert and prove the contrary. The great multitude of respected men and women who say that the Prohibition Law is a tyrannical interference with their personal liberty which they propose openly to resent and repudiate, must be prepared to take without whining the consequences of breaking the law.—From an Editorial in the New York Times.

Enforcing Good Citizenship. At this writing a masonic lodge in Ohio has had its charter declared forfeited by the grand lodge of the State, and cannot petition for reinstatement before the next year's meeting of the latter. This was done because one of its members was convicted of violating the Prohibition Law, and in the

opinion of the grand lodge it failed to adequately punish him. If all the grand lodges of masonry and all the fraternal orders should take a similar stand and insist that their membership be law-abiding, there would be a great lessening of the number of dry law violators.

If your Officials Don't Enforce the Law. When the officials or your town or city or county won't enforce the law, you may be able to get results by turning the spotlight of publicity upon them.

First form a committee, federation, or league representing all the moral and church forces of the community, and raise an expense fund. Then employ two reliable men to make a survey, locating all gambling joints, vice resorts and other places that are running contrary to the law. Arrange with at least one of the newspapers to publish the names and locations of the law violators. A good way to create the desired publicity is to read the results of the survey at a mass meeting, after which the newspapers will be glad to print the report. In that way the facts are given to the public, and once the people know what is going on, there will be an insistent demand for the enforcement of the laws. No official can long disregard publicity of this kind.

A specific exposure in which names, dates and places are given will almost always stir up activity on the part of the officers.

General accusations are worthless. The facts given must be specific, and care should be taken to have at least two witnesses ready to establish the charges in court if necessary. The reason for two witnesses is that one is not enough to prove a case. If a man is accused of a crime and the accused denies it, the case is even, but if the accuser has a witness who will testify to the same facts, it is comparatively easy to get a conviction.

The objective of a campaign of this kind should be to compel the officials to act, in place of doing the work for them. Private prosecution should be undertaken only as a last resort. If an organization takes any action it should be to remove the recreant officers.

Another plan that really gets results is to mail copies of the law to law violators. Call attention to complaints, quote the law, and emphasize the penalty. Such a method is simple, but it is sometimes very effective for the reason that it "throws a scare" into the offender. He does not know exactly what might happen, and he naturally fears the worst.

Don't forget the potency of bouquets. When an officer does something that meets with your approval, send to him and his superior a note of appreciation. At best it is a disagreeable task to do the work of a judge, constable, deputy sheriff or policeman, and brick bats are generally more plentiful than compliments. For that reason words of praise do much to encourage a faithful officer.

If you should be called upon by an officer to help him, you should regard this invitation as a compliment, and do your best. Officers sometimes fail because they cannot get the right kind of cooperation in procuring evidence.

Law enforcement, in order to be really efficient, is the result of team work between officials and private citizens, and when both groups pull together the law really becomes a terror to evil-doers.—Albert Sidney Gregg, in The Christian Herald.

For Discussion. 1. Modern misapprehensions of the meaning of liberty. Liberty is not the antithesis of law.

2. Should we wait till all the people are ready for a good law before we pass it?

3. What is expected of a Christian citizen? See Chapter VI of The Christian Life in the Modern World, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

4. What The Association Against the Prohibition Movement is doing. Its members in your locality. See its leaflets.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHAT MAKES A GOOD CITIZEN

Beginning the Lesson. You remember our lesson about Peter's denial of his Lord. When Jesus foretold Peter's fall and restoration, he said to Peter: "Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." Peter obeyed that command. We have seen him carrying out this work, and today we have a passage from one of his letters in which he is seeking to encourage these who were suffering wrongfully, and thus to establish them more firmly in the faith.

What did he tell his readers that they as good citizens should do?

Why we Have a Law Prohibiting the Use of Intoxicating Liquors. The old gang used to sing in the taverns, "We want what we want when we want it," and then they proceeded to want and to get copious quantities of beer and whisky. But a new group sprang up who knew what they wanted and when they wanted it. Business men, tired and disgusted with the inefficiency of drinking men, wanted a dry city. Wives suffering hardships and deprivations because the saloon-keeper got the husband's money first, knew what they wanted. Reformers, knowing that all evils such as poverty, licentiousness, thieving and the rest ran back to the saloon, knew what they wanted. Preachers and millions of church members, seeing how their work was handicapped by the inroads of drink, knew what they wanted. Thus the Eighteenth Amendment was written into the Constitution.—John R. Ewers, in the Christian Century.

A Good Citizen Obeys the Laws of his Country. Suppose every one did just as he liked in a home, with no regard to the needs or wishes of the other members, would that home be a happy one? Discord and chaos would reign there. You recall the times of the Judges, when each man did that which was right in his own sight regardless of other men, and you recall what a wretched, chaotic time it was. Sometimes one hears it said of a boy or girl that he or she is "absolutely lawless": what does the remark mean? Such a one is an undesirable member of a school or any organization or community.

God made laws to help men live according to his will. Governments make laws for the benefit of its citizens, and good citizens obey them, whether they like them or not. Many do not like the Eighteenth Amendment to our Constitution which prohibits the manufacturing and use of intoxicating liquors. Many others do not like the law which prohibits stealing. To permit each individual to decide for himself which laws he dislikes and therefore to disobey them, would soon lead our land to ruin.

What is our Golden Text? How does it apply to the keeping of our prohibition law? In his earlier years Rudyard Kipling was wont to say, "There is no harm in liquor taken moderately." Then one night he saw two young girls made drunk by two men in a concert hall and he wrote this confession: "My own demand for beer helped to send those two girls reeling down the street. Better it is that a man should go without his beer than to bring temptation to the lives of young fools such as the four I had seen."

"Let every American," cried Lincoln, "every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others."

How to Avoid Transgressing Law. I have never had time, not even five minutes, to be tempted to do anything against the moral law, the civil law, or any law whatever. If I were to hazard a guess as to what young people should do to avoid temptation, it would be to get a job and work at it so hard that temptation would not exist for them.—Thomas A. Edison.

Love Worketh No Ill to his Neighbor. A mail-boat was returning from the West Indies. Among the passengers was a man who had with him a dog of which he was very fond. One day a small child was playing with the dog. After throwing a stick on deck for the dog to catch he suddenly turned and threw the stick into the sea. At once the dog jumped over after it. In great distress the owner ran to the captain and begged him to stop the boat and rescue the dog. "Stop the mails for a dog! I can't do it," said the captain. "Then you shall stop the ship for a man!" exclaimed the owner, as he flung himself overboard. Of course the ship was stopped, and both man and dog were rescued.

That man took a great risk for the sake of his dog. Should not a good citizen be willing to risk, not his life, but time and energy in helping the enforcement of the prohibition law to prevent others from throwing away their lives in drink? Love not only does no ill to his neighbor, but does his neighbor good.

Sentence Sermons. The law-abiding citizen is the loftiest patriot.—James Stifler.

Free government has no greater menace than disrespect for authority and continued violation of law.—Calvin Coolidge.

The solemn purpose in our heart to maintain temperance and purity will render us invincible.—W. L. Watkinson.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 26

REVIEW: LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER

GOLDEN TEXT: Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. Matthew 4.19

READ 1 Peter 5.1-11 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.6-13

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Ascertain how many recognize each allusion as you read it. After a member of the class has explained the reference, ask a few questions about the lesson in which it occurs.

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul,
Love is the only angel which can bid the gates unroll,
And when he comes to call thee, arise and follow fast,
His way may lead through darkness, but it brings to light at last.
—Henry van Dyke.

And the voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him on the holy mount.—Peter.

On the spire of the belfry tipped with a vane
Of metal, the friendly flames of the spring sun
Glanced like the tongues of fire beheld by
Apostles aforetimes.—Longfellow.

You, Lord-Legate
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to learn
That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear
Deceived his master, ay, and thrice, one Lord.—Tennyson.

I gave up all to follow thee—
Even like him who gave his nets
To winds and waves by Galilee!—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

Let all dear hearts with me rejoice, as did the saints of old
When of the Lord's good angel the rescued Peter told.—Whittier.

We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.—Longfellow.

A photographer makes a sensitive plate, exposes it to just the rays of light that he chooses, dips it into the proper solutions, and holds it up to the light to see if his picture is there. What else did this Great Teacher do on that day but hold up three souls to the light to find out if the reflection of the Son of God were fastened there?—J. M. Stifler.

"In warring Germany I found professors spreading the idea that Germany is the rock selected by the Almighty God upon which to build his empire."

Your accent, like St. Peter's, would betray you,
Did not your yellow beard and your blue eyes.—Longfellow.

We are inclined to obey man rather than God, to think more about what others will say than about how God will judge.

"You see the church can no longer say, like Peter, 'Silver and gold I have none,'" boasted Innocent the Fourth to Thomas Aquinas, and that great philosopher remarked in his turn, "Nor can she say, 'Rise up and walk.'"

Thou who hast thyself
Endured this fleshhood, knowing how as a soaked
And sinking vesture it can drag us down
And drown us in the melancholy deep,
Sustain me that I walk these waves
Resisting!—Mrs. Browning.

And in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from the grave away.—Whittier.

A REVIEW OF PETER'S WORDS

Under what circumstances did Peter utter each statement below?

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.
Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.
Lord, save me!
Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.
Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall never be unto thee.
We must obey God rather than men.
Rabbi, it is good for us to be here.
Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee.
I know not this man of whom ye speak.
God hath made him both Lord and Christ.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. Mention the principal events in the life of Peter.
2. Under what circumstances did Simon receive the name of Peter?
3. How did Peter show his humanness?
4. How did he show inconsistency?
5. How did he show changeableness and also steadfastness?
6. How did he show growth?
7. In the early chapters of The Acts how does he justify his name of "Rock"?
8. How do Roman Catholics and Protestants differ in their estimation of Peter?
9. In what respects was Peter like us?
10. Give an account of the First Epistle of Peter.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Where was Peter's home?
2. How did Peter first meet Jesus?
3. What was Peter's greatest sin?
4. How did he prove the genuineness of his repentance?
5. Tell a story which illustrates Peter's cowardice.
6. Tell a story which illustrates Peter's courage.
7. What great confession did Peter make in regard to Jesus?
8. What instances of Peter's impulsiveness can you recall? Presumption? Fearlessness? Timidity? Outspokenness?
9. How was Peter persecuted?
10. Why do you like Peter?

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults. 1. Prominent Characteristics of Peter. 2. Peter the Martin Luther among the Apostles. 3. Peter's Weakness and Strength. 4. How Peter Became Broad-Minded. 5. Peter's Discourses. 6. Peter's Epistles. 7. Peter as Shepherd of the Flock of God. 8. Outstanding Impressions Made by the Study of the Life of Peter.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Peter the Impulsive. 2. Peter the Self-Confident. 3. Peter the Hero. 4. Peter's Failures and Successes. 5. Peter the Learner. 6. Peter the Fisher of Men. 7. An Interesting Story about Peter. 8. Peter's Great Experiences. 9. The Life of Peter.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Why did the Isrealites need a king? 2. How do you regard Samuel's attitude in the crisis? 3. What qualities for leadership did Saul possess? 4. What qualities are needed in our national leaders? 5. Is leadership a gift, or can it be acquired? 6. What is your school doing to train leaders?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Read chapters 9, 10 and 11 of First Samuel. 2. What fine traits of character does Saul show in these chapters? 3. How is Saul described in 1 S. 9.2? 4. How did Saul keep the requirements noted by Micah in our Golden Text? 5. What was Saul's first act as king? (1 S. 11.1-11.)

THE TRADITIONAL TOMB OF SAMUEL

THIRD QUARTER

EARLY KINGS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL FROM SAMUEL TO ISAIAH

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

Aim: To promote personal and national righteousness by a study of Israel's early kings and prophets.

LESSON I—JULY 3

SAUL CHOSEN KING

GOLDEN TEXT: What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6.8

LESSON 1 Samuel, Chapters 9-11. DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.1-8

1 SAMUEL 10.17 And Samuel called the people together unto Jehovah to Mizpah; 18 and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you: 19 but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore, present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands. 20 So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 21 And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage. 23 And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him, whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, *Long* live the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

1 SAMUEL 11.12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. 13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SAMUEL'S REMINDER OF GOD'S GOODNESS, 10.17-19. Read The Historical Background. The prophet Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and reminded them that God had delivered them as a people in former days from the oppression of the Egyptians and of other kingdoms, and now they were rejecting God in demanding a king.

"Forget not all the sunshine of the way
By which the Lord hath led thee" (F. R. Havergal).

"Now therefore present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands," was the conclusion of Samuel's speech. "A wise man has said that to make the best of things in the right way is to let things make the best of us. This is what Samuel did. He made the best of this crisis in national affairs in the right way by nobly doing all he could to carry out what must be, although he did not like it, and thereby he brought out the best that was in him—magnanimity, generosity, greatness of spirit that rises above all that is envious and revengeful and petty.

It is one thing to submit to the inevitable because we must; it is quite another thing to submit graciously and let the inevitable make the best of us.

II. THE SELECTION OF A KING, 10.20-24. Samuel conducted the selection of a king by lot as if in the very presence of the Lord. Important matters were often decided by lot in Old Testament times. In Proverbs 16.33 we are told that

The lot is cast into the lap;
But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah.

It is thought that the "lap" here stands for the "basin" of an urn or vase. The scapegoat was chosen by lot (Lev. 16.8); the location of the several tribes in Canaan was settled by lot (Num. 33.54); the trespass of Achon was discovered by lot (Josh. 7.14-21).

First, the tribe of Benjamin was "taken," that is, chosen by lot, from among all the tribes; then the family of the Matrites from among all the families or clans (thousands); then the house of Kish, and at last Saul himself. When they looked for Saul, he had disappeared. The people then sought to know God's will either through Samuel the prophet, or by means of the Urim and Thummin on the breastplate of the high priest's ephod: see Ex. 28.30; Num. 27.21; 1 S. 28.6. The answer came: "Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage." They found Saul and brought him forth, and when it was seen that he was a head taller than all the rest, they thought this fitting in one who was to be their king. "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" asked Samuel.

"Saul in Israel, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Nero in Rome, William the Silent in Holland, Philip II in Spain, Washington and Lincoln in America—all the powers that be, or have been, were ordained of God. And yet in every case the forces that have created them, and the causes that have exalted them, are to be sought in the character of the nations over which they have ruled. God ordains the power, but he ordains it to fit the people. A bandit-chief for a tribe of brigands, a tyrant for slaves, an inquisitor for bigots, a liberator for a race of freemen. The ruler is but the exponent of the inmost thoughts, desires, and ambitions of the ruled; sometimes their punishment, and sometimes their reward" (Henry van Dyke).

And the people raised the shout which has been repeated down the ages, "Long live the king!"

III. THE CHARTER, 10.25, 26. Samuel drew up a sort of charter, which doubtless declared what were the powers and restrictions of the king, and what was his relation to the people and to Jehovah. "In substance, at any rate, it probably resembled the law of the king in Dt. 17.14-20" (Kirkpatrick). This document was "laid up before Jehovah," which seems to mean that it was written in a book and the book was placed in the ark with the copy of "the book of the law," Dt. 17.18-20; 31.26.

IV. SAUL'S DETRACTORS, 10.26, 27. Certain worthless fellows asked contemptuously, "How can this man save us?" They did not send him a present, as was expected of those who acknowledged his kingship. Saul showed good sense

PALESTINE
in the Time of
DAVID AND SOLOMON
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PHENICIANS
Mt. Lebanon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
ASHER
NAPATALI
Hazor
Waters of Merom
MANASSEH
(Beyond Jordan)
Argob
ZEBULON
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
Hammath
Mt. Tabor
Shunem
Yarmuk
Megiddo
ISSACHAR
Mt. Gilboa
Beth-shean
GAD
Jabesh Gilead
Mahanaim?
MANASSEH
Jabbok
Mt. Gerizim
Shiloh
Mt. Gilead
AMMONITES
Joppa
EPHRAIM
DAN
Bethel
Bethhoron
Ai
Michmash
Jericho
Rabbath Ammon
Gezer
BENJAMIN
Jerusalem
Gilgal
Abel Shittem
Mt. Nebo
Heshbon
REUBEN
Adullam
Keilah
JUDAH
Hebron
Dead Sea
PHILISTINES
SIMEON
MOABITES
ARABIAN DESERT
Red Sea
Ezion-Geber
Elath

and the right spirit by paying no heed to them. "He was as though he had been deaf," the margin of the Bible reads. He controlled himself, and was slow to anger.

"Who wears a crown must fear to see
Both crown and kingdom slip away:
Who rules himself a king shall be,
Secure unto his dying day" (Arlo Bates).

V. AMMONITE TERROR, 11.1-3. An opportunity soon came to Saul to prove his power. One hundred and fifty years before this, Jephthah, the judge, had subdued the Ammonites, but they had recovered their power, had enslaved many cities, and were troubling the tribes east of the Jordan. Under Nahash, their king, they attacked Jabesh in Gilead. The people thought surrender their only possible chance for life, but Nahash imposed barbarous terms—he would accept them as vassals if they would consent to have their right eyes gouged out. Josephus explains that in battle the shield covered the left eye, and thus the men would be rendered incapable of warfare. The people asked for seven days' respite, promising that if in that time none came to their rescue they would submit to his terms. Nahash agreed, for he had no fear that relief would be sent. Then they sent messengers throughout Israel to tell of their plight.

VI. SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES, 11.4-11. All Israel wept, but did nothing. Saul had gone back to his customary labor, and the news reached him as he came with his oxen from the field. "The Spirit of God came mightily upon him." He killed his oxen, cut them up, and sent pieces to all Israel with the message that "Whoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." (Recall Scott's description of the Fiery Cross which was sent throughout the district which acknowledged the chieftain's authority, in The Lady of the Lake, 3.1.) The warriors responded to the call of Saul. With a great army Saul crossed the Jordan, relieved the beleaguered town, and utterly routed the enemy. Thus Saul proved himself worthy of his kingship.

VII. SAUL'S MAGNANIMITY, 11.12-13. On the theory that there are two accounts of the choice of Saul (see The Historical Background), these verses are understood as an editorial paragraph added to harmonize them. The people, in their enthusiasm for their king, would punish his earlier detractors (10.27), and they say to Samuel, "Who is he that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." Saul now appears in an admirable light, he is too great to bear a grudge, and he declares, "There shall not a man be put to death this day." Then he humbly gives all the glory to God, "For today Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel."

"Mercy is an attribute of God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice" (Shakespeare).

VIII. THE CHOICE OF SAUL AS KING APPROVED AT A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 11.14, 15. "Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there," said Samuel. The people went to Gilgal and there made Saul their king. The crisis had not made the man; it had only revealed him so that the people recognized his fitness for leadership. His success had proved him worthy of kingship. The people themselves had had only tears for their distressed brothers at Jabesh, but Saul's sympathy had led to action. He had been quick in making up his mind in the crisis, skilful in arousing the cowardly people to fight, and skilful in his leadership. The choice of Saul as king, which had been publicly confirmed by the national assembly at Mizpah (10.25), was now ratified by the people. The Septuagint Version adds: "And Samuel anointed Saul to be king."

"If you were born to honor show it now
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it" (Shakespeare).

And there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah: thank-offerings for their deliverance and for their king. And there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

"The best band between authorities and subjects is that they intend to be mutually faithful" (Cramer).

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY OR ORIENTAL LIFE

He was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward, 10.23. Stature and strength were regarded in ancient times as belonging of right to royalty. "The prevalence of the feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of Persia, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with persons around him," says Kitto. The former Emperor of Germany seems to share in this feeling. His photographs were taken in such a way as to heighten his stature, and no photo was ever taken of him standing by the side of the empress, for she was taller than he.

On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out, 11.2. Such barbarous treatment was a common practise among the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians. Our illustration is from a marble slab found at Khorsabad, and represents Sargon of Assyria holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring inserted in his under-lip, and thrusting a spear into his eye. Once it was the custom for the Sultan of Turkey on ascending the throne to slay or blind all his half-brothers. It is said that Vambrey (Trails in Central Asia) describes the blinding of prisoners as a regular practice at Khiva.

Sargon Blinding a Prisoner

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the leader of the Exodus? Who was the leader of the Conquest? Who was the most important of the judges? Who was the last judge and first prophet?

Israel Becomes a Monarchy. For a long time Samuel, the greatest of all the judges, had ruled in peace. Then the Philistines once more troubled the Israelites. Moreover, it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel; and his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes and perverted justice. The effect upon the Israelites was most disastrous. They felt the need of a strong military leader, one who would unite them as a nation and save them from the combined opposition of the Philistines. Then, too, they had long envied their neighbors who gloried in their kings, and the Israelites would be like them and have their own king. Therefore the elders came to Samuel at Ramah and demanded a king. Their request did not please Samuel. He preferred a more direct dependence of the nation upon Jehovah. He made a solemn protest, telling them what they would suffer under a king, but the people persisted.

Samuel was a true statesman; he saw that the time had come when Israel must have a king, and he yielded. Thus began the United Kingdom of Israel. Hitherto relief from enemies had been gained by spasmodic efforts, led by champions who had appeared when needed, but upon their death the tribes had lapsed each time into disunion and confusion and anarchy.

Hitherto the rule of the judge had been somewhat casual. He had little opportunity to impart his counsel unless it was sought by the people. He was in authority in a time of crisis, but when that was over his authority waned. Now the government was to be more systematic and orderly. The king was a king at all times and for life. Moreover, he and his court were supported by the people, and he had prestige and power.

The Two Accounts of the Choice of Saul as King. The story of the rise of

the monarchy is given twice: in 9.1 to 10.16 and chapter 11; and in chapter 8 and 10.17-27. In the former account the king is the gift of Jehovah, given to "save my people out of the hands of the Philistines." In the latter account, which is our text for today, the demand for a king by the people is a rejection of Jehovah, and it is declared that kings will prove tyrants (chapter 8). "What is clear and certain is that the monarchy was both a blessing and a peril. Israel was not safe unless she could present her Philistine and other enemies a united front, and the monarchy was thus a political necessity, securing for the people this unity, concentration and solidarity."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The name *Mizpah* means "watch tower," and was given to several lofty places in Palestine whence there is a far view over the country. The Mizpah to which Samuel summoned the people was in the tribe of Benjamin. The place now called Neby Samuil, the Prophet Samuel, is the traditional site.

Saul was inaugurated king at *Gilgal*. There were several Gilgals; this Gilgal was in Mt. Ephraim.

Gilead was the territory of the Israelites east of the Jordan. The Ammonites claimed the southern part of Gilead, and had they captured *Jabesh*, the capital, they would soon have made themselves masters of all Gilead.

Saul went to his home to *Gibeah*, verse 26. "Saul's residence, like that of the ancient Judges, was at the seat of the family. That beacon-like cone, conspicuous amongst the uplands of Benjamin, then and still known by the name of 'the Hill' (Gibeah) had been selected apparently by his ancestor Jehiel, for the foundation of one of the chief cities in Benjamin (I Ch. 8.29; 9.35). There Saul had 'his house,' and his name superseded the more ancient title of the city as derived from the tribe—formerly Gibeah of Benjamin, henceforth Gibeah of Saul down to the time of Josephus. And there, king as he was, we might fancy ourselves still in the days of Shamgar or of Gideon, when we see him following his herd of oxen in the field, and driving them home at close of the day up the steep ascent of the city" (Dean Stanley).

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

It was a difficult situation which Samuel faced, and in his manner of handling it there is a lesson for us. There comes a time in many a class when its members are no longer satisfied with existing conditions. They demand a change. The teacher's first impulse, may be, we cannot change. Rarely is such an attitude wise. Concessions should usually be made. Had Samuel refused to give the people a king they probably would have chosen one for themselves, and Samuel would have lost his chance of controlling the national destinies.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. Saul was endowed by nature with gifts and graces, he was "goodly to look upon," tall and strong and courageous, "every inch a king." He had many admirable qualities. He was a dutiful son, faithful in carrying out his father's orders (Chapter 9), courteous to Samuel, and modest in his estimate of himself. He was not a braggart; after being anointed by Samuel he returned home and told about the finding of the lost animals, but said not a word about the great honor that had come to him at the hands of Samuel. He was a man of great possibilities—a man of promise. That he saw visions and dreamed dreams, Samuel's promise to tell him "all that is in thy heart," shows: he had meditated long upon his country's sad state, had believed that a great destiny awaited Israel, and had longed to do what he could to further the coming of that destiny. Suddenly the chance came. He learned that God had chosen him to be the leader of his people. What avenues of opportunity opened before him, what power for good, what a chance to build up a new and strong and God-fearing nation!

Leadership the Problem of the Church. Humanly speaking, leadership is the only problem of the church. The world is greedy for leadership, too much so. It is so greedy that it only waits till it hears the voice of a leader, and then it follows. The tragedy of it is that it follows a bad leader just as it follows a good leader.

This is the reason for so many organizations and institutions that are evil in their influence. They have followed a bad leader. People are like sheep in this regard. You have seen a flock of sheep being taken from one field to another, where there were bars let down in the fence. The first sheep, in its anxiety to get across to the salt or water or food, will jump three bars high, and every sheep in the flock will jump because the one before him did, even though all the bars were taken down.

People walk alone only until the voice of a leader is heard, and then they follow. The greatest need today of the world in a human way is for real, sane leadership. A leader is one who goes before. He must be ahead of the crowd, but not separated from it. "A leader is the foremost among companions"; hence, leadership is helpfulness. It is unbounded faith. The greatest need of the church today is for good leadership.

The qualifications for leadership are: Humility, Purpose, Confidence, Personality, Quietness and Self-control, Patience, Sympathy, Self-surrender, Willingness to Obey, and Love.—Marion Lawrance, in My Message to Sunday School Workers.

The Leader and the Follower. There is little basic difference between the group and the leader. Big minds are simply used minds—enlarged and strengthened by constant exercise. The leader is just a little ahead in his vision, in his planning, in his attitude.—Association Press Bulletin.

An Essential Attribute of a Leader. No man can persuade people to do what he wants them to do, unless he genuinely likes people, and believes that what he wants them to do is to their own advantage. The secret of Jesus's success was an affection for folks which so shone in his eyes and rang in his tones, that even the commonest man in the crowd felt instinctively that here was a friend.—Bruce Barton, in The Man Nobody Knows.

At the Service of Others. Leadership is not something to be secured on a hurry-up order, telegraphed to some ready-made factory. It is a fabric to be spun and woven day after day on a tedious handloom at home.

Men who really do lead their neighbors are men who have lived among their fellows simple lives of brotherhood long enough to convince everybody that they are very certainly not "out for anything for themselves." Unselfishness, in fact, is the first condition of leadership that lasts long enough to arrive anywhere. For it is dead sure that men won't follow anybody who is known to be chiefly hunting benefits to himself. Even the suspicion of a selfish interest is quite enough to break the spell of loyalty which is a leader's whole capital. Anybody therefore who craves to be a leader must be content to serve an apprenticeship of brotherly helpfulness and sympathy and cheerful burden-bearing till his record testifies beyond all confutation that he has no ambition to climb above his neighbors but only an ambition to rise with them.

Men who lead must be ready, when required, to dare anything. Nobody is a leader who sets a limit to the perils he is willing to incur or the hardships he can afford to undergo. Boundaries of "too much" for one's endeavor or one's courage mean defeat for one's self and rout for whoever tries to follow. So another condition of leadership is a determination that balks at no sacrifice. Only a spirit that stands this test has grip and grit enough to call other men into enterprises of hazard. And enterprises without hazard are not worth leadership.

But where does all this come out? The analysis of leadership brings to view elements of what? Just service, isn't it? Jesus said: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whoever would be first among you shall be your servant." Those who are leading found the power to lead by putting themselves unselfishly, humbly, unreservedly at the service of men.—Condensed from Applied Religion for Every Man, by Nolan R. Best.

Potential Leaders. A youth, for instance, of sound inheritance and wholesome tastes, comes to his manhood with a fund of health, friends, education, and money, and enters the life of the modern world. What potential leadership and serviceableness are put into his hands! What a chance is his to guide, to serve, to lift, to redeem!

Now watch this youth as the world's work and play lay hold on him and he becomes immersed in the routine and frivolity of life. Money and sport, getting and spending, office and clubs, overwhelm his idealism and sweep him into the current of commonplace, until he sinks into the monotonous ocean of mediocrity. Nothing

that is base or discreditable need be reported of this submergence of a soul. The man may emerge at last a respectable, comfortable, portly citizen, to be described in the commercial phrase of our obituaries as "successful." But what a waste has there been of the finest stuff; what precious by-products have remained unutilized; what undiscovered strength of character and unsuspected resources of nobility and wisdom have been drowned by the rising tide of prosperity or indolence!—Francis G. Peabody, in Sunday Evenings in the College Chapel.

Meeting an Opportunity. The first feeling of many young people when an opportunity for service is presented to them is aptly expressed in these words of Browning:

I was not born
Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank
From aught which marked me out apart from men:
I would have lived their life, and died their death,
Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny.

A wholly natural feeling that, but one which must be speedily overcome. Our word *responsibility* is derived from the Latin word *respondere*, which means to respond, to answer, the latter composed of the prefix *re*, meaning *back*, and *spondere*, meaning *promise*. A responsibility calls for a response, a promising back that we will fulfil the obligation. Not to respond to the responsibility that belongs to us is cowardly and unchristian.

For Discussion. 1. Was Israel wrong in asking for a king? For books helpful during this Quarter's lessons see suggestions given on page 19 of our Introduction.

2. Qualities needed by our national leaders. For a magistrate to be weak is to be wicked.—Wm. M. Taylor. See Earning the Right to Lead, Outlook, July 22, 1911.

3. It will be worthy of a freed, enlightened, and at no distant period a great, nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted sense of justice and benevolence.—George Washington.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Were Samuel's words consistent with humility? 2. How do the public officials of our city compare with Samuel? 3. If any official is corrupt, what is your responsibility in the matter? 4. Is there less official corruption in our country than formerly? 5. Is crookedness in a public official more severely condemned now than formerly? 6. Do you ever defraud another in any way?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CALLS TO LIFE SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson. Saul had heard the people talk about wanting a king. But he had had no thought about being himself king. When he started in search of his father's lost asses (Chapter 9) he was not saying to himself, "I wish I were going to be king, going to get rid of all these small, tiresome tasks and have a great, worth-while position." If any one had told him that his search would end with a crown, he would have laughed at them. Yet he met the prophet Samuel, and Samuel told him that God meant him to be king. It was the greatest surprise of his life.

But that call was not luck, nor an accident; nor was it the fancy of a prophet for a fine-looking man. It came because of what Saul was and had been in his father's house. Some of us dream of great tasks. But if we want them, we must show ourselves fit for them.

Saul's Qualifications for Service. Saul in our lesson text shows many noble traits of character; what are they? He hides among the baggage when the lot for king is cast—he is modest and unassuming and shrinks from the honor which Samuel has already put upon him in privately anointing him as king. When some worthless fellows bring him no present as is expected, and thus show that they despise him, he holds his peace, in no way showing resentment. He shows his sympathy for his fellow Israelites at Jabesh-Gilead by deeds, not tears. And then he shows fearless courage and promptness in attacking the enemy, and when the victory is won and the people in their gratitude would put to death the men that had opposed him, he shows his magnanimous spirit in preventing the execution. And he gives God the glory for the victory, instead of claiming it for himself

His Call to Service. Under the elms on College Hill a freshman sat looking off toward the sunset. He was looking through the glory of departing day into his own gray future. He was fighting for a quiet and trustful submission to the inevitable.

The boy was country born and bred. All his life he had dreamed of college and the theological seminary, and then the ministry. From the little red schoolhouse at the crossroads below his father's farm he had entered the Free Academy in the near-by city, and he was graduated at the head of his class. Then he suffered a severe illness. The doctors told the ambitious student that his only hope of recovery was a complete change of occupation. For two years he ploughed and sowed and harvested, and hardly looked inside the covers of a book. Finally he seemed so far recovered that he thought he might enter the college of his choice.

But the first week of study brought back the old pain and dizziness. Gradually he came to realize that he must surrender his ambition, give up the ministry, and go back home to the farm. He wrestled long before peace came. The next day he packed his books and his trunk, said good-by to his teachers and to the friends he had made, and went quietly home.

Steadily and successfully he applied himself to the work of a farmer. His manner of life was a kind of visible conscience for his neighbors. He toiled long hours from Monday morning until Saturday night, but he was always in his place at the morning and evening services of the little country church, and he was constant in attending the mid-week prayer meeting. He taught in the Sunday school, and was a source of strength to the Young People's Society. The church made him an elder, and as the older men were carried one by one to their last resting place, he became the recognized intellectual, moral, and religious leader of the community.

He never stood in the pulpit, but as a Christian farmer he exerted a spiritual influence that any man might covet.—The Youth's Companion.

A Young Girl's Vision of Life Service. All my fondest ambitions were bound up in doing something for the poor. What happy visions were mine as I arranged my doll's wardrobe or trundled my hoop—visions in which I saw myself surrounded by hungry people I was feeding with hot soup, ragged people I was dressing in warm jackets, very sad people I was comforting, and—for my mother's training about goodness making gladness had its effect at a very early age—very bad people I was helping to make good!

They were wonderful day-dreams, and the most wonderful feature about them was that they became dearer, and more real, as the years flew by, until they ceased to be day-dreams at all, and I awoke to find them all, one by one, come true.—Evangeline Booth.

A Born Leader. He was a crippled newsboy, who had received little schooling on week-days and less on Sundays. But he had managed to grapple with one or two living truths. He made them his own, and held them like a rod over his fellows.

He was an obstinate, vehement, energetic boy; a born leader. His clothes were ragged, his feet bare; he could not speak a grammatical sentence, but he ruled his companions like a Napoleon. He formed them into a club, sixty in number, of which he elected himself perpetual head. Its object was "to make honest, decent men" of its members.

He made rules to which his strong will-power forced them to conform. They were neither to drink nor to gamble. Part of their weekly earnings they must put into a savings bank. When he proposed that they should form a beneficiary society for mutual help in sickness, and invited a city missionary to lecture regularly to them, his companions dubbed him in jest the "bishop."

The name seeemed apt and clung to him. He died in his fiftieth year, having accomplished more actual good in the world than many men of threescore and ten.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermon. He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires and fears, is more than a king.—Milton.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the ox and the ass especially mentioned by Samuel? 2. With verse three compare Dt. 16.19. 3. Who told Jesus that if he had wrongfully exacted aught of any man, he would restore one fourfold? (Lk. 19.8.) 4. What are "small dishonesties"? 5. Is your sense of honor keen and true? 6. What is said of Samuel in Ps. 119.6, and what verse in our lesson does it recall? 7. What did Paul say in Acts 24.16 that he strove to have?

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes;
And I have walked in thy truth. Psalm 26.3

LESSON 1 Samuel 12

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 26.1-8

1 SAMUEL 12.1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. 2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day. 3 Here I am: witness against me before Jehovah, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. 4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. 5 And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. 20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this evil; yet turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your heart: 21 and turn ye not aside; for *then would ye go* after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. 22 For Jehovah will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make a people unto himself. 23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right way. 24 Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. 25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. "I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT," verses 1-5. In a solemn address in which he resigned his office as judge, though retaining that of prophet, Samuel stood before his people and announced that he had done their bidding in giving them a king. "And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you." Various explanations may be given for this remark about his sons: by mentioning his age and his sons he referred to the reasons given by the people for demanding a king (1 S. 8.5); the sons were mature men and they proved that their father was of advanced age; he was about to abdicate his position as judge, and he bespoke their kind treatment for his sons who had been his assistants. "And I have walked before you from my youth unto this day." See 1 S. 2.18, when his service first began. Buddee suggests that his thought here was: The king you will find out later, but me you have known well for a long time.

Then Samuel put himself on trial and asked them to witness before Jehovah and Saul, his anointed, as judges, as to whom he had defrauded or oppressed, or of whom he had taken a bribe. "Whose ox or ass have I taken?" is his question. These were the most valued possessions of the people, who were farmers and shepherds. "Of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith?" The ransom was the money offered him as judge to induce him to acquit a murderer.

Compare Paul's assertions of blamelessness in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Acts 20.17-27. The people emphatically testified that Samuel's record was stainless, and he reminded them that God was their witness.

> "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?
> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
> Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
> And hath not sworn deceitfully."

II. SAMUEL'S RETROSPECT AND THREAT OF PUNISHMENT, verses 6-18. Samuel next recounted their history as a nation, their deliverance from Egypt, their ingratitude to God for all he had done for them, and the retribution that followed their ingratitude. Pointing to the king whom they had demanded, Samuel promised that if they and he remained true to God all would be well, but warned them that if they rebelled against God's commandments they should suffer. Then he

enforced his words of warning. It was the time of wheat harvest, when rain never falls in Palestine. He told them he would ask the Lord to send rain and thunder to prove that they had done wickedly in asking for a king. Rain fell and thunder crashed; the people believed them to be a sign from Jehovah, and they believed in Samuel who had foretold their coming.

"Two things were conspicuous from the day of Jacob's arrival in Egypt: the vacillation of Israel, and the changeless administration of Jehovah; their inconstancy and unfaithfulness, his constancy and fidelity. Their swerving, like a pendulum, from rebellion to repentance, and from repentance back to rebellion. When their sin made judgment necessary, judgment followed; when their sorrow for sin made mercy possible and proper, deliverance came. Jehovah was never weary of their shallow repentance and reform, but went, in his forbearance and compassion, just as far as his own rectitude and plentitude of love would allow or permit" (Arthur T. Pierson).

"We are told that he 'giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not.' The phrase 'upbraideth not' is significant; it reminds us how, when a former beggar, or petitioner for favor, comes back to us again and again for some new alms or additional indulgence, we upbraid him with his former visits, as though it were an abuse of our goodness again to draw upon it. But he delights to give, and the more we ask and the larger our requests the more we honor his boundless love and exhaustless riches. Something akin to this, is true of his forgiving mercies. If 'seventy times seven' in one day we turn again, saying, 'I repent,' he forgives, provided only that our repentance be sincere."

III. SAMUEL'S WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT, verses 19-25. The people confessed that they had done wrong, and begged Samuel to intercede with Jehovah in their behalf. Samuel bade them not fear for, although they had done wrong in asking for a king, if they would but remain true to Jehovah he would not forsake them, for they were his chosen people. The demand for a king seemed evil to Samuel, because he feared the people would rely wholly on their visible king and forget Jehovah, their invisible Leader. "It is as if he said, The great question is not under what particular form of government you live, but upon your loyalty to God and his righteousness. Be true to him, and you shall flourish under this or any form of government, you shall be brought through every difficulty and change of national life into that ultimate glorious condition promised to your fathers. 'Only fear the Lord' and then 'fear not.'"

"Did not our Lord teach us that everything in human life depends upon the religious idea—that the knowledge and service of God constitute the one grand question which decides all other questions? Did not our Master say, with a fulness and eloquence all his own, only fear the Lord and all, all shall be well? Throughout his whole ministry Christ kept severely to this" (W. L. Watkinson).

"It hath pleased Jehovah to make you a people unto himself."

"More even than the Hebrew people have the American people been favored by God; their land is richer, their history more splendid. Never in the world's history has there been a hundred years more remarkable than our hundred years; never an empire ready-made handed on to the people prepared therefor; never a growth in wealth and in population comparable to the growth which has taken place on this continent within the last hundred years. We are an elect people of God. We have received preëminently his blessings and his gifts" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"As for me," said Samuel in laying down his authority as Jehovah's representative in the theocracy in favor of the newly-appointed king, "I reserve for myself the privilege of being your intercessor—I should sin against Jehovah were I to cease praying for you—and of instructing you in the good and the right way." And once more he urged them to fear and serve Jehovah, and warned them that if they did wickedly they and their king also should suffer the penalty.

Have we sinned against Jehovah in not praying for one another and for his work? We think of intercessory prayer as a privilege; Samuel regarded it as a duty. Was he not right in saying that not to pray for others is a sin? We may be as selfish in our prayers as in our actions.

"The sinner's own fault—it was,
Clearly his own fault. Yet I think
My fault in part, who did not pray,
But lagged and would not lead the way,"

sings Christina Rossetti. To pray for others is a duty as well as a privilege.

LIGHT FROM ARCHÆOLOGY AND ORIENTAL LIFE

Of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? verse 3. To a casual observer of oriental life, the prevailing official corruption is something appalling. To the close inquirer it seems indigenous and inevitable. To the true servant of Jehovah it was appalling, but neither inherent nor necessary.

The common Hebrew word for a "bribe" is, properly speaking, a "present," and is used of the propitiatory gifts sent to a superior in order to secure his protection (1 K. 15.19; 2 K. 16.8), or by one who seeks to evade deserved punishment (Prov. 6.35; 21.14). Presents are the ordinary preliminaries of visits and negotiations; their motive and effect naturally come to be the influencing of the beneficiary (Prov. 17.8; 18.16). Citations of instances from oriental or biblical history would simply overcrowd my pages. We shall only cite Jacob's gift to Esau (Gen. 32.13; 33.10; 43.11; 1 Sam. 10.27; Ps. 95.12) and the present of Mero-dach-faloden to Hezekiah (Is. 39.1). In general Semitic history we may go back some hundreds of years, and in the casually disclosed correspondence of the El Amarna tablets the business is seen to be quite overdone. The annals of the Assyrian kings fairly swarm with instances. It is, therefore, the most natural thing in the world to send a present to a judge before a case comes up for hearing; though publicity was, of course, not desirable in the transaction (Prov. 21.14), and was usually avoided, as a suggestive proverb informs us (Prov. 17.23).

The evil, indeed, was dealt with by the lawgiver of the ancient code, and that in the most reasonable and persuasive fashion: "Thou shalt take no bribe; for a bribe blindeth those that have sight, and perverteth the cause of the righteous" (Ex. 23.8; Dt. 16.19). Yet the abuse was prevalent in the time of the Judges. In spite of the noble record and example of Samuel, his sons, judges by his own appointment, became notoriously venal (1 Sam. 8.1). Samuel's protest and challenge on his own behalf (1 Sam. 12.3) were of themselves an indication that his virtues were rare.—James Frederick McCurdy, in History, Prophecy and the Monuments.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where was Saul inaugurated king? What services followed?

No Intervening Events between the Last Lesson and This. After the sacrifices on the occasion of the "renewal of the kingdom" in connection with Saul's inauguration, was an auspicious moment for Samuel to lay down his authority in favor of the new-made king. His farewell speech as judge we study today.

Although Samuel gives up in this farewell address his official position as judge of Israel, he retained his leadership as prophet for many years. He was the last of the judges and the first of a long line of prophets who curbed the despotic power of the kings. He established a school for prophets at Ramah, Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal. As Moses was the great legislator and founder of the priestly order, so Samuel was the great reformer and organizer of the prophetical order.

The Book of Samuel. See page 20 of our Introduction.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Samuel's thought was that if he ceased to pray for Irsael he would be sinning against God. What a remarkable truth is involved in that conception concerning prayer! Quite simply stated, it is that in prayer we create conditions which make it possible for God to act in ways otherwise impossible to him. When we cease to pray we limit God. When we pray we open his way to act. We may not be able to account for this philosophically. It may seem to us as though our praying could not possibly make any difference to the putting forth of the divine power, even though it might possibly affect his will. As a matter of fact, the reverse is true. No prayer of mine can change the will of God, which is ever "good and acceptable and perfect." But my prayer can and does make it possible for his power to

operate in ways impossible apart from it. When I cease to pray for men, I sin against God first, because I hinder him in that I do not help him. Therefore I grievously sin against men when I cease to pray for them.—G. Campbell Morgan.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PUBLIC LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. Mr. Spurgeon once received a letter from a man who declared that if he did not receive within two days a specified sum of money from the preacher he would publish certain things which would put an end to his influence and popular esteem. Mr. Spurgeon sent back a postal with these words: "You, and your like, are requested to publish all you know about me across the heavens." The great preacher was serene in the consciousness that there was nothing in his past which could injure his good reputation.

Dr. A. T. Pierson, in a convention held at Bristol, England, called upon George Müller for his testimony. "No one present," said Dr. Pierson, "will ever forget how, after threescore years of residence among them, this princely and saintly man boldly appealed to any one present to expose any word he had spoken or act he had done, during all that time, to bring reproach upon the truth of God or the God of truth. It was the first time I had ever heard such a challenge, and it struck me as reaching toward the most exalted region of the morally sublime. The man who in God's presence was always bowed down with a sense of his sinfulness, could, in the presence of his fellowmen who had most intimately known him, stand up straight and defy any accuser. One could not but wonder how many of us could dare such a challenge with the inward confidence that there could be no answer to condemn."

These instances have recalled to your minds the time when Samuel, the first of the long line of prophets of old, could challenge his world to say aught against him or his deeds in public life. What were the circumstances?

Samuel's character, both personal and official, was unimpeachable. In his old age he could lay down his scepter as judge, conscious that the most searching investigation of the way he had held his office would not reveal one act of crookedness, one small abuse of power. He dared publicly challenge any one who had aught against his administration to make it known. There was no accuser. He could call God to witness to his absolute probity and integrity in office.

The Hero and his Country. Samuel went through a long life of public service. There were endless opportunities for clever and adroit bits of selfishness. There were innumerable ways in which he could have exploited the people for his own ends. All these temptations Samuel successfully resisted. It is easy for us to see that the fashion in which piety and patriotism combined in Samuel formed the central secret of his power. He was a better man to his own people because he was a man of God, and he was a man of God in a more practical and human sense because he was an unselfish leader of his own people.

The peculiar power of Edward Everett Hale's little tale, The Man Without a Country, lies in its visualizing for us in graphic fashion the utter loneliness which would come to a man shut off from all the ministry of his native land. We may speak very idly of patriotism, and we may have our hours of thoughtless indifference to its highest sanctions, but we are likely to find that the men who resemble Samuel in deep and utter loyalty to the highest interests of the group of people with whom they are most intimately associated in national ties turn out to make the largest contribution to the life of the world.—Lynn Harold Hough, in The Christian Advocate.

The Happy Warrior.

The man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value, must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last

From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is he
That every man in arms should wish to be.—Wordsworth.

A Conscientious Public Official! A number of years ago a member of the Missouri legislature accepted $25,000 for his promised vote upon a certain bill. Later he accepted $50,000 from the other side, and returned the $25,000. Some one turned state's evidence, and the legislator was put on trial. "Why did you return the $25,000?" the legislator was asked. With scorn in his voice the man replied: "I'd have you to know that I'm too conscientious to take money from both sides!"

Graft in Political Life. About twenty years ago Bishop George R. Grose made the following statements about an epidemic of graft in our country. How does the situation today compare with what he then depicted?

"Many men make three distinctions in conduct—a deed is honest, dishonest, or law honest. If it is law honest, no further questions need be asked.

"Under the euphonious phrase, 'practical politics,' a vast deal of dirty politics is justified. And the most alarming thing which we observe today is not the mere fact that certain United States Senators are convicted of high land theft, that officers of the Federal Government are found guilty of fraud, that the heads of great industrial and insurance corporations have been false to their trust, and have stolen the people's money, which was a sacred trust; but this is the menace of our political liberty and our moral safety—that dishonesty in business and in politics is excused if it is lawful, and that successful scoundrelism which keeps out of the penitentiary is not condemned.

"The moral sense of the country was shocked by the corruption which was discovered in the Federal Government. United States Senators voted money from the United States Treasury for personal expenses which were never incurred; gigantic frauds were disclosed in the letting of governmental contracts. The spirit of graft appears in our city governments, in our consular services, in the Post-Office Department, and in our legislative bodies, State and national."

Men and Measures. The unfailing instinct of democracy for men is a true and right one. Always it has been the man who has led, the man who has swayed, the man who has governed; and it always will be. The average voter cannot intelligently judge measures. A few of the more enlightened may be able to do so. But the great mass of busy citizens cannot; they have neither the knowledge nor the experience nor the time. Government is probably the most complex and specialized of all businesses. It can be properly transacted only by men who have given their lives to investigating its difficult and subtle problems.

The one great task of the voter is to judge the character of men. It will be said that this also is immensely difficult. So it is. But we all face that task every day. The future of popular government depends absolutely upon whether the average voter can perform that task or not. We ought to realize this and make all our education, all our training, all our discipline, develop and perfect us for it.

The ordinary citizen cannot govern for himself. His supreme and paramount business is to get good men and wise men to do it for him.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The satisfaction which comes to one as he reviews his life's work and feels that he has been true to its demands upon him.

2. It is not possible, O Athenians, that a power should be permanent which is marked with injustice, perjury and falsehood.—Demosthenes.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where is Bethlehem? 2. Whose great grandson was David? (Ruth 4.17). 3. Who was born in Bethlehem "of the house and family of David"? 4. What does 1 S. 17.34, 35 tell us about David as a shepherd lad? 5. By what does God judge you?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW TO MAKE A CLEAN RECORD

Beginning the Lesson. "It is better always to be incapable of cheating and lying than to be capable of chivalrously laying down one's life in some great stress of duty," declared Phillips Brooks. Samuel proved himself a man incapable of the one and capable of the other. He did not lay down his life for his people, but he did give up what was dearer to him than his life, his position as their judge and leader. Why did he do this? In his farewell address as judge he asked the people to bear witness as to whether he had ever cheated: what are his words? What did the people say? Samuel had a clean record.

The Second Engineer. A steam-engine has a contrivance called the governor. If you have watched a threshing-machine in motion, you doubtless noticed the two balls that kept swinging round and round, sometimes going very fast, and sometimes slower. When whirling very fast the balls stood out almost at right angles with the spindle on which they revolved. When they were whirling slower the balls were hanging down. But wherever the balls were, they were governing.

When they were swinging at such a height that they seemed anxious to get away from the spindle on which they were turning, they were saying to the engine, "You are running too fast, you must slow down." And while they were saying that they were using the one arm they possess, to shut off steam. In that way they compelled the engine to slow down. In fact, if the governor were not there to do this, the engine might run away and break itself to pieces, possibly kill men, and do a lot of other damage.

When the balls were swinging more slowly and lower down, they were saying to the engine: "You must move a little faster. There is a lot of work to do, and at this rate of speed it cannot be done." Then, while this was being said, they were using their arm to pull the throttle-valve open so that the engine could get more steam, run faster, and do more work. So you see that these two, almost silent, swinging little balls, are a kind of Second Engineer. They really govern in the First Engineer's stead.

Now, men and women, boys and girls, are each a kind of engine fitted up to do the work of our Heavenly Maker. And each man and woman, each boy and girl, is fitted with a governor. That governor we call conscience.

When we want to do things that we should not do, and are inclined to run away because we have too much steam, the Second Engineer says: "You must slow down; you are running too fast; you will injure yourself, and in doing so you will be sure to injure others." Then, when we do not want to do the thing we ought to do, Conscience, the Second Engineer, speaking for God, who is First Engineer, says: "You should not run so slow; you ought not to hesitate, but run in the way of God's commandments."

God, the First Engineer, does not force us to love and to serve him, but wishes us to do so willingly. He wants us to obey the Second Engineer, and keep "a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men."—Evan Wiggle, in The Christian Work.

A Conscience Void of Offense. In his trial before Felix, Paul answered the accusations of the orator Tertullus, and added: "I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always." The aim of his life had been to have a conscience at peace. He had exercised himself to have such a conscience, that is, he had attained it by rigid self-discipline. Our word *conscience* comes from two Latin words that mean literally *knowing with.* I know nothing against myself, Paul says in 1 Cor. 4.4 His conscience did not accuse him of offense against God or men. His record was clear.

There is a fable about a beautiful ring which the owner wore very comfortably when his thoughts and acts were good, but which contracted and crushed his finger painfully when he cherished an evil thought or did aught that was wrong. Like that ring is the conscience which God has given to us all. One whose conscience does not reproach him is content and at peace, but an accusing conscience hurts like the fabled ring.

To have a conscience clear one must listen to its counsels and heed its warnings. The conscience of one who continually disobeys becomes "hardened," we say, and fails to guide him. It is said that as Lincoln was riding one day he saw a pig struggling in a morass and in danger of strangling. He dismounted and helped the animal out of his trouble, not of course, without covering himself with mud in the effort.

When a companion laughed, Lincoln observed: "I did not do it for the sake of the pig, but for my own sake; I had to in order to have a clear conscience." It was because Lincoln obeyed his conscience in little things, exercised it, as Paul says, that he had the courage to do a big thing when the time came and give freedom to the negroes.

"We must be eagerly zealous about the rightfulness of the smallest issues of life," Dr. J. H. Jowett truly says. "In our moral dispensations we must recognize not only an avoirdupois measure for the just weighing of the hundred weights and the tons, but also an apothecary's measure for the righteous apportionment of scruples and grains. We must seek to be faithful in that which is least."

A Few Questions for You. There are many who never steal, they are certain, and yet whose record of strict honesty is not wholly clear. An interesting set of questions was once given a class in school. They included among others the following: "Would you keep the money if your conductor failed to collect your fare?" "Would you exaggerate in order to make a conversation more interesting?" "If you accidentally saw on your neighbor's paper one point which would solve a whole problem would you take it?" "Is it more honorable to cheat openly or secretly?" How would you answer these questions?

Whom Have We Defrauded? In our games there are some boys and girls with whom we like to play, and there are others with whom we do not. The reason is that we know some will always play fairly and heartily, and others, we have found, play so unfairly and in such a mean spirit that there has been no pleasure in playing with them. We don't like those who resort to any trick that they may win. We like manliness and straightforwardness, and I hope we ourselves are always prepared to show these qualities in our own play whether we may be winning or losing.

I should not like to see a prize on my bookshelves which I had got by winning marks in a deceptive way, or by some other form of cheating. Every time I saw it I should feel that it was despising me and looking down upon me in shame. There would be something of fraud, and lying, and stealing in getting such a prize. A prize which you might win in that way would not really belong to you but to some other boy.

The same applies to our games. Don't let us steal shabby victories on the playground either. If everything is not fair and square in a game, the victory is no victory. Many games are spoiled by the unfair advantage some one wants to take. Let us scorn everything that is shabby and mean. Let us despise everything that has the appearance of cheating or deceiving.

That was great praise which Nathanael received from Christ: "Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile," no deceit. Christ had watched him at a time when he did not think that he was being watched. Lord Kitchener said this fine thing of General Gordon, "Gordon was a white man without a smudge." That was a soldier's blunt but forceful way of putting it. You know what a smudge is—a smudged copybook—a smudged character—"Gordon was a white man without a smudge." I am glad that I have known boys and girls of whom the same thing might in some measure be said.—Adapted from The Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

Sentence Sermons.

In vain we call old notions fudge,
And bend our conscience to our dealing;
The Ten Commandments will not budge,
And stealing will continue stealing.—Lowell.

He that prayeth for another is heard for himself.—Jewish Proverb.

This, this is all my choice, my cheer,
A mind content, a conscience clear.—Joshua Sylvester.

The testimony of a good conscience is the glory of a good man.—Thomas à Kempis.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was Samuel honorable in his statement as to the purpose of his visit? 2. To what extent may we be governed by expediency? 3. How was David's life as a youth a good schooling for the place he was destined to fill? 4. How was Samuel made aware of the will of Jehovah? 5. Are you misled by appearances? 6. Do you base your opinion of others upon their outward circumstances, their social standing, their reputation? 7. Who are your local leaders? 8. Why have they been chosen? 9. Who are your State leaders? 10. For what qualities are they conspicuous? 11. If your local and State leaders are not righteous, whose is the fault?

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

GOLDEN TEXT: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4.12

LESSON 1 Samuel 16.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.1-6

1 SAMUEL 16.4 And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. 7 But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the mdist of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SAMUEL'S MISSION TO BETHLEHEM, verses 1-3. Saul had failed to measure up to the standard of what was expected of him: see The Historical Background. Saul's failure caused Samuel great sorrow. He realized that he must take definite action about Saul's successor, that such was God's will. He must go to Bethlehem with a flask (horn) filled with oil to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the Lord's chosen king. Yet he hesitated to go. Would not Saul kill him if the fact became known? Then a way out of the difficulty came to his mind: as a matter of prudence he would give as the object of his visit the holding of a sacrifice, and would keep silent about the more important reason for his coming. He would give one reason for his visit, which was a true one, and would say nothing about another reason, which he was under no obligation to divulge.

"It was not concealment the object of which was to mislead any one, or to induce any one to do what he would not have done had the whole truth been known to him. When concealment is practised in order to take an unfair advantage of any one, or to secure an unworthy advantage over him, it is detestable. But to conceal what you are under no obligation to reveal, when some important end is to be gained, is quite a different thing" (W. G. Blaikie).

II. SAMUEL'S RECEPTION IN BETHLEHEM, verses 4, 5. When Samuel reached Bethlehem the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Comest thou peaceably?" It had been Samuel's duty as judge to go from town to town to render judgment and punish offenders (1 S. 7.16), and the elders feared he had come to their town for that purpose. Samuel reassured them when he said, "I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourself, and come with me to the sacrifice." Before participating in any sacred act the Israelite "sanctified himself" by ablutions and by refraining from whatever would make him ceremonially unclean. Samuel himself superintended the purification of Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. Jesse was now an old man, 1 S. 17.12.

III. THE SELECTION OF DAVID, verses 6-12. When they came to the sacrificial feast, Samuel looked upon Eliab and said to himself, "Surely Jehovah's anointed is before me." But Jehovah spoke to Samuel, we are told. The voice was an inward one. The prophet is described as carrying on in the depths of his conscience a dialogue with God, as the sons of Jesse, one after another, pass before him. Eliab was another Saul, tall and handsome, and the voice within Samuel's soul warned him.

"Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature," it said; "because I have rejected him; for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." "An apple may look fair to the eye—quite ripe and red, and yet it may be full of rottenness within; so, on the other hand, the fruit may be brown, and flecked with spots, and burrowed into by wasps in search of its sweetness, but if we cut it open, and find it sweet in its substance and sound to the core, it is good. It is just the same with man in relation to his God."

Man judges by seeing; Jehovah, by being. What thou art before thy God, that thou art and nothing more!

Abinadab, Shammah and four more of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, and he rejected them all. "Are these all thy children?" he asked Jesse. On learning that the youngest was away keeping the sheep, Samuel ordered him sent for, declaring that they would not sit down to the feast which followed the sacrifice until he arrived. And Jesse sent for David.

"The great consecrations of life are apt to come suddenly without warning: while we are patiently and faithfully keeping sheep in the wilderness, the messenger is hurrying toward us with the vial of sacred oil to make us kings" (Saxe Holm).

David appeared—ruddy (this means either that he had red cheeks or that his hair was auburn), and withal of a beautiful countenance, and Samuel knew at once that he was the chosen one.

"Pearls and diamonds, emeralds and rubies have to be sought and found, they are not lying about as pebbles. Great men were once boys, and must be searched for and found. David must be discovered, and it is Samuel's crown of honor that it was he who did it. He found the boy and gave him his chance, and second only in honor to the great man is the man who discovers the great man who is yet untried and unheralded, and sets him on the way to greatness" (Robert W. Rogers).

IV. THE NEW SPIRIT GIVEN FOR THE NEW DESTINY, verse 13. Samuel anointed David. "It was a prophetic designation of the man whom God in his own way and in his own time would place upon the throne—a secret sign and declaration of God's foreordained purpose." David's brothers may have thought that Samuel anointed David to be his successor as prophet, for it does not appear that Samuel told the others, or even David himself, the object of the anointing. And the spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel returned to Ramah.

"In the hour of David's anointing it dawned upon him that his was a selected life—that he was set apart for an unusual destiny: what thought is greater than this to a soul that is noble?" (C. C. Hall).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The height of his stature, verse 7. "Height and strength were regarded as belonging by right to royalty," says Kitto. "When in battle less depended on military skill than upon the bodily prowess of the chief in single combats, or in the partial actions with which most battles commenced. It was natural that the people should take pride in the gigantic proportions of their leader, as calculated to strike terror into the enemy and confidence into his followers; besides, it was no mean advantage that the crest of the leader should, from his tallness, be seen from afar by his people."

This is he, verse 12. How contrary it was to the custom of oriental lands to choose the youngest son for preferment, Mrs. Ghosn el Howie shows (in Sunday School Times). A native Syrian princess, with wealth and prestige, perceived that the younger of her two sons was in favor, and was about to be appointed sub-governor. "May it please thee," said she to the consul, "to appoint X—, the older of the two?" "Only Allah could appoint him," was the rejoinder. Though X— was all but imbecile, yet the worthy lady would have preferred him because he was the older of the two. Samuel and Jesse, like this princess, and all orientals, in fact,—would have chosen the eldest. As for the youngest, he would have been the very last to be considered.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Why did the Israelites have a king? How was the first king chosen? What good qualities did he show at first?

The Rejection of Saul. Matters were not right in the relation between the king and the prophet. After Saul had been king for some time Samuel told him God wished him to raise an army and exterminate the Amalekites and destroy their possessions. Saul won a great victory of these old and cruel foes of the Israelites, but spared the king and some of the spoils. To Samuel's inquiry Saul replied that the people had saved the spoil, and it was for sacrifice. "To obey is better than sacrifice," the prophet thundered, and declared that God had rejected Saul from being king.

Saul's increasing self-will was making him unfit for the kingship, and Samuel under God's guidance determined to find the right successor. He found him in David, the shepherd lad.

As Cunningham Geikie says, the first king in such a monarchy had a position of extreme difficulty, totally unlike anything hitherto known. "While in name the chief magistrate, it was only in subordination to the supreme will of the invisible King, Jehovah, expressed through especially commissioned prophets. On every side the royal power was limited and directed by the authority of men who had no political office in the state. It was almost inevitable that the first experiment should be a failure. Everything was new, untried, strange. The first reign was at best only an attempt to set the new kingship at work in its singular subordination to theocratic principles. But it served a great end; for if Saul had not thrown light on the demands and conditions of the new monarchy, there could have been no David. Saul was only the step by which David mounted to his throne, safe through the failures of his predecessor."

The Ancestry of David. David was the son of Jesse, the grandson of Obed, the great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz. From his great-grandmother Ruth, the Moabitess, and his ancestress Rahab of Jericho, there was alien blood in his veins. "It required three generations for the descendants of aliens to become members of Israel, and thus David could be reckoned a full Jew, though his father still stood in a measure outside the congregation," says Dr. Geikie.

The Date. Various dates are assigned for the year of David's birth. It is helpful to keep in mind that David lived about one thousand years before Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethlehem lies on a terraced hillside six miles south of Jerusalem. A short distance away is the traditional place where Jacob buried Rachel. Near by in the field of Boaz Ruth had gleaned behind the reapers. Here David was born and here he was anointed by Samuel.

It was a journey of twelve miles from Bethlehem to Ramah, whither Samuel went after his visit to Bethlehem.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Are here all thy children?" If they are not here, why are they not? If seven-eighths of the members of your class are present today, are you well-content without finding out why the one-eighth is absent? Often one will be absent necessarily, but more often he could come and would come if you showed your interest in him, inquired about him, sent another pupil to tell him he is missed, or, better still, went yourself to his home or wrote him a letter. Many pupils never know how much their presence or absence concerns their teacher.

You should be solicitous not only for your pupils' attendance at Sunday-school, but for their attendance at church as well. That day in Bethlehem the prophet Samuel summoned all the people to a sacrificial feast, a popular religious service, and in those days the children were a part of such gatherings. They still are in the Jewish synagogues of today. Their presence in the Christian churches also should be a matter of course. Children belong in the church with their parents, but if the parents of your pupils are indifferent, willing that their children should attend or not as they please, yours is the opportunity of creating the desire.

Senior and even adult classes sometimes need a word of exhortation upon the subject of church attendance.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
DISCOVERING FUTURE LEADERS

Beginning the Lesson. For what purpose is Samuel on his way to Jerusalem? Why do the elders of the city meet him trembling? What does Samuel tell them is his object in coming? Is this his primary reason? Ought he to have told them his chief reason for coming? Was his course a subterfuge considered allowable in those days, or was it right according to Christian standards? To what extent may we be governed by expediency? Why does Samuel bid them sanctify themselves, and what does this mean? What relation is Jesse to Ruth the Moabitess?

We need not stop to recall the very familiar story of the way in which the seven sons of Jesse passed in review before Samuel and were rejected. We are told of a lively dialogue that took place in Samuel's mind as he weighed each man before him. What difference did the prophet perceive between the human and the divine judgment of a man? A man's reputation is what other men see in him: his character is what God sees.

What do you think David's reputation was in that family? Evidently he was unappreciated by his brothers and even by his father. It never occurred to Jesse that Samuel would care to see David, his youngest son, who was off tending sheep, engaged in work which in eastern countries is usually allotted to servants, or the despised of the family. David was so unlike his brothers. His father probably could make nothing out of the dreamy lad, and thought him romantic and impractical. David counted for little in that family, but he counted for much in the eyes of Samuel who judged him as God judges.

How God Prepared David for Future Leadership. He made him a shepherd. David as king had, what Saul never possessed, the power of gaining the affection of the people as a whole; and the mingling in his character of simplicity and dignity may have had much to do with it. In the long watches with the sheep he learned to see God in nature. How full the Psalms are of this feeling.—Ps. 19; 104. The sense of God. time to think, knowledge of nature, courage to deal with the attacks of wild beasts upon the flocks, music, poetry—all these things were the result of that opening training.

How little Mackay of Uganda thought when he was doing drudgery work as an engineer's apprentice that this was going to be the best of all trainings for the practical and pioneering mission work that was afterwards to be his. How little did James Chalmers, playing about as a small boy among the fishing boats on Loch Tyne, realize that the ability he was gaining in handling open boats under all kinds of conditions would be the very first necessity of his subsequent work in New Guinea.—R. Bruce Taylor, in Sunday School Chronicle.

Men Whom the World Follows. All the living members of a class that was graduated from Princeton College more than twenty years ago returned lately to visit their Alma Mater, and to talk over old times. After they had gone, a venerable doctor of divinity, who had been their tutor when they were students, said:

"I discovered one singular fact with regard to them. Among them were three men who, as boys, were full of enthusiasm, who believed that they were called to some special work in life, and who sacrificed everything else to that. They were the only men in their class who had made their mark on their generation.

"One was an inventor, another a leader in a great reform movement, the third an author. Neither of the three had made money, or was reckoned, in the worldly sense of the word, a successful man; but they were the only ones who had strongly influenced their fellow-men."

In olden times men generally believed that God himself summoned them to a certain work or method of life. It was their "vocation" or "calling," because he called them to it. In these modern days men are apt to espouse the cause or take up the occupation which will pay best.

Sometimes, however, there still comes to a boy or man the conviction that a Power higher than the world, with its policy and expediency, is urging him into an untried path. If he is sure that he is right, let him attempt it, fearing nothing. He will soon have a great following. The world in its ordinary movements is shrewd and mercenary; but in its heart it loves the man with a high purpose, and in the end is led by him.—Youth's Companion.

God Is still Seeking Men. The great thing that God was seeking in Israel was a man who would do his will. He has been seeking such men ever since, through

all the weary centuries. He seeks them still. Shall he find them in us? In position lofty and lowly, in work called secular or sacred, in obscurity or prominence, who will be plastic to the divine hand, amenable to the holy guidance, obedient to the heavenly vision?

The path of him who will say "Yes" will not be easy; but you do not want an easy path. It will be far better—a path lighted up with the glory of the approbation of God. He is waiting for those who will say, in the spirit of Jesus, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Charles Brown, in The Birth of a Nation.

It Holds Good for the Work of the Kingdom as well as for the World of Business. Mr. Charles M. Schwab started as a day laborer without influence or a dollar to his name. He has turned out to be a giant in the business world. There are probably dozens of men in the steel business who know almost as much about that business as Schwab knows. But where other men concentrate on their own personal contribution to the perfection of some part of the business, perhaps some technical part, Schwab takes an enormous interest in studying and developing men whose talents can be used in broadening and extending the business. You will find that note running all through his story—a curious watchfulness for the new man and almost childlike enthusiasm when he discovers him. Take his delight over Eugene Grace, for example. Grace was a switchman eight years ago, and today he is president of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and his income is a million dollars a year. Schwab is immensely pleased over Grace. He predicts that Grace will some day be the biggest industrial figure in America.

In other words, a man like Schwab, by finding and encouraging men, and by inspiring their loyalty, carries himself and all his associates on to a success which none of them could achieve alone. He establishes a long battle line of organization in which there are great numbers of men intelligently used and genuinely appreciated by a commander who realizes that his own success is manifolded by the work of his associates.

In business it is not the individual producer who gets the biggest or the surest rewards: it is the organization builder. And any man, no matter how small his business, ought to recognize that fact. Unless an employer is interested in finding, training, holding and dividing with good men, the business he is engaged in can never grow. It will remain the work of one man; and the work of one man is bound to be limited in size and profits. You can go farther if you take others with you.—American Magazine.

The Secret of Tomorrow. Where is the promise, the secret of tomorrow? Somewhere in the brain of a Dante, a Luther, a Comenius, a Watts who lives today. The security of the age to came, as it is of this and has been of every other period, is in men and women so developed as to dream great dreams, fulfill great purposes, and inspire others by their leadership.

A high duty of the present is, therefore, to discover and train great souls for great leadership. Yesterday discovered and unfolded these men—a Roosevelt, a Hanly, a Folk, a Hughes, an Eliot, a Pasteur, a Carnegie. Tomorrow will be looking for them, and if today is unfaithful in preparing them, tomorrow will mark time and be a failure. Instructed by history and experience, what shall we find to be characteristic of those who are leaders? The master workmen in the kingdom of fuller life are bound to be constructive, prophetic, and good.

Whether he be a Buddha praying under the Bo tree, a Confucius writing his maxims, or an Assisi suffering the sorrows of his kind; whether he be a Wycliff kindling the dead torch of revelation, a Savonarola preaching himself to the scaffold, or a Wesley feeling his heart grow strangely warm; whether he be a seventh Earl of Shaftesbury saving the submerged, a John Pounds leading forth the prisoners for debt, or a William Booth calling the depraved upward and the haughty-minded to humility; whether he be a Phillips pleading for the Negro, a Hughes demanding just laws, or a Baker destroying the saloon; whether he be a Howe inventing a machine to sew, an Edison making gutta percha to speak, or a Wright wrestling with the secrets of aerial flight—whoever and wherever he is, as long as he fills his soul with the high-born spirit of service and flings its product out upon the world, he is a leader.—Condensed from an Address by Carl Gregg Doney.

For Discussion. 1. The duty of Bible school teachers and ministers to discover the future leaders in the youth of today and help prepare them for their tasks.

2. To what extent may we be governed by expediency?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do orientals regard the calling of another "a dog" as the strongest expression of contempt? 2. Why are David's words not mere bravado? 3. What qualities does David show in this story? 4. Against what giants must a Christian fight? 5. What should be his armor?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY GOD CHOSE DAVID

Beginning the Lesson. Saul is king and will remain king for some time longer, but he knows the time is coming when neither he nor any of his descendants shall sit on the throne of Israel. See The Historical Background. Saul does not know, however, that steps are being taken for the appointment of his successor. Over in Bethlehem a family gathering is being held where Samuel is choosing the youth who is destined to become the greatest king Israel ever had. The family are descendants of one whom you well know, Ruth the Moabitess. There are eight sons, and the father, Jesse, is Ruth's grandson. Which son was chosen? How?

Why God Chose David. David was not chosen hastily nor on impulse. There was promptness in the choice of the one who was to be Saul's successor, but care was taken that the choice should be the right one. Each one of the sons of Jesse was called and carefully judged by the prophet Samuel, God's messenger. One after the other they came, till all had passed before him. Each man had his chance of the crown Samuel had to give, each one's qualifications were duly weighed and found wanting. When David was summoned there was wonder on his face, for he marveled that the great prophet had summoned him, the youngest, who was but a shepherd lad. And he must have been amazed when Samuel poured the sacred oil upon his head. He knew then that God had chosen him for some special service—to become a great captain, perhaps, or a prophet like Samuel. After the feast Samuel went back to his home at Ramah, and David went back to his sheep. Perhaps David visited Samuel later and learned that he was destined to become the king of Israel.

Oriental Shepherd and his Flock

We sometimes wonder who is to take a great leader's place. We look around and can see no one who is fit to do so. But in school, factory, in office, God is already calling, preparing, these who are to become the leaders. In quiet and obscure places, in the din and bustle of great cities, are boys and girls today who will be the great leaders of the future.

David was not chosen on account of his appearance. He was good to look upon, but so was Eliab, the oldest son, whom God rejected. The choice of David was made because of what he was in himself. He had a fine spirit. Something looked out of David's eyes and illuminated his face which was missing in the faces of all the other sons of Jesse. It was the glow and power of a noble and beautiful soul. Fitness of mind and soul is the essential in God's sight for tasks in his Kingdom.

What God Wants. Everybody admires the man or the boy who is big enough to lead—big enough, I mean, in his influence and his natural power and command. Every boy looks up to the one who is the leader, who is always full of ideas and suggestions of things which will be fun to do, and can show everybody else how to do them, and do them so well himself that everybody else will want to do them his way. God says that the thing which is in the end most fun of all, and the biggest, finest, gladdest thing of all, is just this game of right living; and the boy who is the biggest leader is the boy who can lead his fellows in this biggest thing. And so, just as a long time ago God called David to lead his people, he is calling men and boys today to lead their people—their friends and acquaintances and companions—into the finer, manlier life which the vision of their souls have shown them. —W. Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

The Opportunity God Gives to Youth. David's anointing meant that neither youth nor anything else keeps one from ultimately achieving the highest duties for which we are fit. Be careful, however, to realize that God rarely reveals to us those duties until the time comes for us to undertake them; and always his calls are first calls to special duties. David was not told by Samuel that he was anointed for the kingship. For him the anointing simply meant that in an especial sense he was called to consecration and service of God in common ways. So hereafter—as results showed—he felt it was laid on him to do all he attempted in the best way he could. When he watched his sheep he tended them well. When he practised on his harp he remembered that God was listening. Thus by thoroughness he fitted himself for a task that was greater than he knew. God does not give to a youth great tasks, but the opportunity of fitting himself for them in years to come. And God gives his finest chances to the man who does his best while he is waiting.—J. G. Stevenson.

Are You a Leader? A young man called on a certain Y. M. C. A. secretary. In the course of the conversation the youth showed that he would like to be appointed as one of the leaders. The secretary suggested that he study and fill in the Self-Analysis Blank used in the Four-fold Efficiency Program. This would indicate some of his qualifications for leadership.

What reason have you to think any one would select you as a leader?—The China Sunday School Journal.

Willing to Pay the Price of Leadership.. "Mollie has come, and now it will all go smooth!" cried a young hostess who was trying to make her shy guests feel at home. "There is Mrs. May! Now the Jenkinses will stop capping stories about how smart they are!" murmured one to another at sight of a frank, modest, charming little person whom everybody stopped talking to greet. "Is Dick going? Oh, well, then, we'll get there all right!"

What is the thing that underlies this sort of speech, heard every day by each of us? Why is there some quality here of leadership that not all of us possess? Well, we could have it, if we really wanted it. Any person who prefers the good of others to his own comfort or pride or vanity or ease can and will be a stimulating, cheering, guiding, transforming sort of person, and nothing but single-hearted devotion to the law of love can ever make that sort of person.—Zion's Herald.

Sentence Sermons. You need not tell all the truth unless to those who have a right to know it all; but let all you tell be truth.—Horace Mann.

"The great leader is not made by the great event that calls for him, but by all the long days of unconscious training that have preceded it."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the whole story, the entire seventh chapter of First Samuel. 2. Why did the Philistine look upon David with contempt? 3. How skillful were the Benjaminites with the sling, as told in Judges 20.16? 4. How does Prov. 16.18 apply to Goliath? 5. What words of the Forty-fourth Psalm befit David's words to Goliath? 6. What giants have you to conquer?

DAVID AND GOLIATH

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27.1-5

LESSON 1 Samuel 17 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.1-5

1 SAMUEL 17.31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. 34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. 36 Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. 37 And David said, Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and Jehovah shall be with thee.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. 41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PHILISTINE PERIL AND GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE, verses 1-11. The armies of the Israelites and of the Philistines were encamped on opposite heights of the Valley of Elah. Every morning and evening for forty days a Philistine giant named Goliath had stood forth and challenged the Israelites to settle the matter by single combat, saying: "I defy the armies of Israel; give me a man that we may fight together. If he is able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us." The Israelites were utterly dismayed. When they saw Goliath approaching, they fled.

"Goliath boasted of just the things in which men are prone to boast today. He had physical strength. His height was six cubits and a span. Athletics had done all they could for him, and he was a fine type of animal perfection. He had splendid military equipment—a helmet of brass, a coat of mail and a spear like a weaver's beam. Surely, if fine material equipment determines combats, the shepherd-lad from the hills of Bethlehem will be annihilated. And he enjoyed the enthusiastic confidence of the Philistines. He was his nation's pride and glory. He strode out amid their shouts, and the cheers were like iron in his blood. But all this counted for nothing, because God was against him.

"Men and nations may attain to a fine animalism, their warlike equipment may satisfy the most exacting standard, and yet, with God against them, they shall be as structures woven out of mists, and they shall collapse at the touch of apparent weakness. The issue was not Goliath versus David, but Goliath versus God!" (J. H. Jowett).

II. DAVID HEARS THE CHALLENGE, verses 12-27. David's three oldest brothers had joined Saul's army, and their father sent David to them with a large quantity of parched grain, bread and cheese. On hearing the giant's challenge, David asked, "Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

Men are often called on to attempt the cure of the wrongs and evils which they perceive and feel; the most colossal evils, the deepest-rooted, the most hopeless. There are any number of people who are willing to bemoan the evils, and many who complain and denounce. There is hardly one in a thousand who will discover in the evil a call to personal service, and who will wear out his life in the endeavor to relieve the darkness and the wrong.

"When David saw the coward hosts of Israel terrified by the boastful giant, and the sore need of a champion to fight the battles of the Lord, there came home to his heart and conscience this clear personal call: 'This is thy business; thou must do it; thou must thyself be the champion.' The same thing came to Carey, brooding over the midnight darkness of heathenism, and the miraculous apathy of the church of God. He was driven to answer his own prayers, and to lay himself an offering on the altar of service. It is ever the way of God's working with men. The need which you see resolves itself into a call for personal service" (Charles Brown).

III. DAVID IS FLOUTED BY HIS BROTHER ELIAB, verses 28-30. Eliab heard David and spoke angrily and scornfully to him, reminding him that for all his pride he was but a shepherd. David kept himself under control and quietly answered: "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" as he turned away from Eliab.

"Often envy and misunderstanding, even from quarters where they might least be expected, dog the heels of those who are taking risks and making sacrifices for country, church or God. But both in conversation and controversy, the prudent man knows how to give the soft answer that turneth away wrath. This is one of the paths to victory" (J. E. McFadyen).

IV. DAVID WINS SAUL'S PERMISSION TO FIGHT GOLIATH, verses 31-37. David's words were reported to King Saul, and the latter sent for him. David then offered to fight the giant. Saul looked at David and said: "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." David then told Saul how he had slain a lion and a bear, and explained his confident trust that God, who had delivered him from those ferocious animals would now save him from the Philistine. Then Saul consented to risk the combat.

"We must always have young Davids. In our days they take to the sky, but whatever their work the safety of the nations depends upon its producing young fellows quick of mind, sound of limb, stout of heart, and ready to answer any call of the country's danger with a cheer" (Lynn H. Hough).

V. DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMBAT, verses 38-40. Saul had David clad in his own close-fitting garment; over it a coat of mail was donned, his head was protected by a helmet of brass, and his sword was girded on. David is called a stripling in verse 56, but he must have been full grown (about twenty years old, it is believed), or he could not have put on Saul's armor. Saul was exceptionally tall, however, and his armor was too heavy for the youth. He tried to walk in it and could not. Casting it aside, he took his staff in his hand, and choosing five smooth stones out of the brook, which was probably dry at the time, he put them in his shepherd's bag. This wallet, as the bag was called, was made out of a whole skin of a kid and was slung over his shoulder or hung at his side. The Israelites were unskilled in the use of swords (1 S. 13.19-23), but very skillful in the use of slings and bows and arrows. "David desired to go forth to battle in the lightest possible armor; strong in the Lord, not in himself; armed not with steel, but with faith" (Augustine).

"David might stumble and fall by the very weight of his unfamiliar armor. Insincerity, the putting on of what is not our own, is the road to ridicule and ruin" (J. E. McFadyen).

VI. THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN DAVID AND GOLIATH, verses 41-47. The Philistine approached, "a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron," Matthew Henry calls him, preceded by a man bearing the shield. When he saw a ruddy youth before him armed with a sling and staff he expressed his contempt. "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with stones?" he asked. Stones were used against beasts, not men, and to call another a dog was the strongest term of contempt that could be used. And then he cursed David by his gods, "made use of the name of Jehovah

in his cursing, and thus defied not David only, but the God of Israel also," and declared that he would give David's flesh to the birds for food. Recall Homer's words: "Thy flesh shall glut the dogs and carrion birds of Troy."

David replied that in contrast to the sword and spear and javelin of his opponent, he was armed with the name of the Lord of Hosts, "the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied." "David's confidence overtops that of the Philistine. The boast of the giant is thrown back at him. The result: all the earth shall know that Israel has a God" (Smith). "The battle is Jehovah's," David cried. "Never Puritan went into battle with a loftier inspiration. It was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught when he chose 'the Lord of Hosts' for his battle cry at Dunbar, and greeted the rout of his foe with the words of the Psalm 'Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered!'" (Geikie).

"It is a great matter for the soul when it knows that in life's battle it does not stand alone. But you cannot use 'the name of the Lord of hosts' unless there is an absolute identification of interests between him and you. You are not at liberty to speak in the name of your native country for your private purposes; but only when your life is bound up in its fortunes, as an ambassador's should be" (F. B. Meyer).

VII. DAVID'S VICTORY, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINE ARMY, verses 48-54. When the two came near enough together, David hurled his stone and struck the Philistine in the forehead, which was the only part of the giant unprotected. With what force the stone was hurled is shown in the statement that it sank into the forehead. The stone stunned the giant, and David finished his work with Goliath's own sword. The Philistines fled when they saw that their champion was dead.

"Notice the prudence and care with which David prepared for the fight. He carefully selected the stones he wanted; and, not rashly anticipating that the giant will fall a victim to his first stone, he prudently took with him five stones. Even the man who trusts his God is in honor bound to prepare himself, as far as human foresight may, for all eventualities. It was no haphazard shot that David hurled at the giant—otherwise the stone would not have reached the spot with such deadly accuracy—it was the shot of one who had years of practise behind him. God needs men who trust him, but he can do more with them when they are trained" (J. E. McFadyen).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His sling was in his hand, verse 40. The sling was made of leather, or of plaited work of wool, rushes, hair, or sinews. The middle part, where the stone lay, was called the cup, for the sling gradually narrowed toward the extremities, so that it could be easily handled. In the Egyptian sling, which probably was the same as the Hebrew, there was a loop at one end which was placed over the thumb, in order to retain the weapon when the stone was hurled and the other end became free. The sling was used by the shepherds to keep the beasts of prey from the flock, and also to keep the sheep from straying. In war it was the favorite weapon in skilful hands. In using the sling, the stone was put into the broad, hollowed part, the ends were grasped together in the hands, and after a few whirls around the head to give impetus, the stone was discharged, frequently with force enough to penetrate the helmet or shield.—Freeman, Handbook.

Earliest Representation of David
From the Roman Catacombs

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was David's occupation as a youth? How did he gain fearlessness?

The Two Accounts of David's Introduction to Saul's Court. To Saul, David was an unknown youth, for as he went forth to the combat Saul inquired of Abner, his captain, who the youth was (verse 55), and Abner could not tell him. When David returned from his victory, Abner brought him to the king. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house, 18.2.

We have in 16.14-32 a different account. Saul was subject to extreme depression, perhaps to fits of insanity. His officers suggested that music would bring relief, and recommended David to him as "skilful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a comely person." David was sent for, and his playing on his harp had the desired effect on Saul. Saul loved him and made him his armor-bearer.

Evidently we have here two accounts of the way in which David came to be a member of Saul's court. Josephus would reconcile the two by understanding that several years passed between David's life at court as Saul's musician and his appearance in camp ready to fight Goliath, and therefore the king failed to recognize him. Verse 15, which says that "David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep in Bethlehem," seeks to reconcile the two accounts. David, however, is represented as an older man when he came to Saul as a musician than when he fought the Philistine. In the Septuagint, the oldest Greek Version of the Bible, thirty verses are lacking from the seventeenth chapter. Were they omitted because they do not harmonize with the earlier account?

The Two Goliaths. In 2 Sam. 21.19 we read that "Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." Was there another giant by the same name? David's Philistine champion is nameless save in verses 4 and 23. Has the name of Elhanan's adversary been transferred to David's, and is 1 Ch. 20.5 a later chronicler's harmonization of the two statements in Samuel?

After the Victory over Goliath. When the Philistines saw their champion fall they fled in terror toward Gath and Ekron, with the Israelites shouting jubilantly in hot pursuit. The Israelites slew them, and then returned to plunder the Philistine camp.

Meanwhile David brought the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, and put away the giant's sword as a trophy in the Sanctuary at Nob. In those days it was customary to hang up in the sacred buildings the swords or shields taken from an enemy, just as it has been customary in Europe since to erect a monument out of the cannon taken from an enemy in some great battle. Some time afterwards David was forced to flee from Saul, who was seeking his life. He had no weapon, and he went to Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, and asked for one. The aged priest replied that the only weapon he could give him was Goliath's sword. "There is none like that, give it to me," joyfully exclaimed David, and this sword, which he had so bravely won, encouraged as well as aided him in defending himself from his enemies.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About twelve miles west of Bethlehem two wadies, or river-beds, meet, the first starting in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, the other in the neighborhood of Hebron. The united torrents that rush along these wadies in winter have made a deep ravine through the winding valley of Elah, which breaks through the mountains of Judah and then crosses the Low Hills to the Plain.

Location of the Two Camps

The Philistines, you remember, dwelt upon the Maritime Plain and the Israelites in the Hill-country. The Philistines drove their war-chariots up the Vale of Elah till they reached the Plain of Shocoh, which is hemmed in on all sides by hills. Hidden among the bushes upon a hill overlooking this three-cornered plain were the Israelites. Leaving their war-chariots on the plain, the Philistines encamped on the hill opposite the Israelites. The Philistines could not attack the Israelites without descending their hill, crossing the plain and the brook, and ascending the hill of the

Israelites. Meantime the Israelites could hurl down upon them darts and arrows. The Philistines were evidently determined to draw the Israelites down to the plain for battle. They did not expect that any Israelite would be rash enough to risk an encounter with their giant; rather must they have expected the Israelites to become so exasperated by his taunts that they would rush down upon the plain in a body, then the Philistines could quickly outfight them.

In Out of Doors in the Holy Land, Dr. Van Dyke voices the knowledge gained by every Bible student who visits Palestine. "It came upon us irresistibly," he writes, "as we rode on horseback easily across the land of the Philistines in a few hours, that we had never really read the Old Testament as it ought to be read,—as a book written in an oriental atmosphere, filled with the glamor, the imagery, the magniloquence of the East. Unconsciously we had been reading it as if it were a collection of documents produced in Heidelburg, Germany, or in Boston, Massachusetts—precise, literal, scentific.

"We had been imagining the Philistines as a mighty nation, and their land as a vast territory filled with splendid cities and ruled by powerful monarchs. We had been trying to understand and interpret the stories of their conflict with Israel as if they had been written by a Western war-correspondent, careful to verify all his statistics and meticulous in the exact description of all his events. This view of things melted from us with a gradual surprise as we realized that the more deeply we entered into the poetry, the closer we should come to the truth of the narrative. Its moral and religious meaning is firm and steadfast as the mountains round about Jerusalem; but even as those mountains rose before us glorified, uplifted, and bejeweled by the vague splendors of the sunset, so the form of the history was enlarged and its colors irradiated by the figurative spirit of the East."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In this story, we see Saul putting the armor of a man, an unusually large man, too, upon a stripling. Are you, perhaps, making a similar mistake in trying to arm your pupils for the moral battles of life? Do you expect from a child, or an adult who is still spiritually a child, the same type of religion that is yours in your maturity and spiritual growth? Youth has its own religious experience—manhood has another—old age yet another.

A Sunday-school teacher once read to me a letter from a twelve-year-old pupil. It was full of that teacher's own expressions, vague generalizations about delighting to work in the Master's Vineyard, desiring to extend the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and so on. "Is it not a wonderful letter for a child to write?" proudly asked the teacher. It certainly was an unnatural letter. The child was clad in the teacher's armor.

How about the religious convictions which you are teaching—are they your own, or another's? Are you speaking of what you do know and testifying to what you have experienced, or are you but echoing the thoughts and beliefs of others? If you have proved the religious convictions of others, then they befit you. If you have not, can you work effectively with them?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

VICTORIES OF FAITH

Beginning the Lesson. There is no story in the Old Testament better known than this about David and Goliath. It is a fascinating story for children. What is its religious value?

We find it in the source of David's courage. Goliath was confident in brute force. Brute force had no part in David's warfare. "I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. The battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand," David shouted to Goliath. As a shepherd lad David had looked out for the lives of the sheep; as the anointed of the Lord he was ready to attempt great things for his people. "By faith," says the writer of Hebrews in the summing up of that great chapter upon the triumphs of faith, "men have escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness been made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens."

"Stories telling of the victories of the small and frail over bulk and brutality exert an enduring fascination. The feats of Jack the Giant-Killer delight successive generations. The secret of the popularity of such legends is the instinctive pleasure

felt wherever we witness the superiority of intellectual acuteness, when strategy prevails against strength, when the spirit is more than a match for physical prowess. We delight in the triumph of the higher law and force, in knowing that the great decisions are not left to the caprice of ruthless, irrational might. The New Testament furnishes the fullest illustrations of the principle of which David is the symbol and prophecy. "God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise, and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong."

The Champion. Who would have expected that Goliath's antagonist would emerge from the quiet pastures? "Genius hatches her offspring in strange places." Very humble homes are the birthplaces of mighty emancipations.

There was a little farm at St. Ives, and the farmer lived a quiet and unsensational life. But the affairs of the nation became more and more confused and threatening. Monarchical power despoiled the people's liberties, and tyranny became rampant. And out from the little farm strode Oliver Cromwell, the ordained of God, to emancipate his country.

There was an obscure rectory at Epworth. The doings in the little rectory were just the quiet practises of simple homes in countless parts of England. And England was becoming brutalized, because its religious life was demoralized. The church was asleep, and the devil was wide awake! And forth from the humble rectory strode John Wesley, the appointed champion of the Lord to enthuse, to purify, and to sweeten the life of the people.

On what quiet farm is the coming deliverer now laboring? Who knows?—J. H. Jowett.

The Opportunity. The first thing that strikes one in this familiar story is that young David creates his own opportunity. He uses the weapon which is familiar to his hand, and what other men would have thrown away as useless in battle becomes sufficient for his need. The smooth stones serve his purpose. He sees his own gifts and makes the most of what he has. A great many people are ready to fight if only they had Saul's armor instead of their own sling. What they ask of life is another man's opportunity. Thousands of men in the business world thus waste their years in waiting for a large place instead of utilizing the one they have, and creating their place with their own weapons. It is the same with the experience of life. Every man feels himself ill-equipped. He looks at the task to be done and seems to be meeting a giant with a sling. Young David, however, creates his own opportunity. Here is the secret of efficiency—the discerning of a chance where others would despair, the utilizing of weapons which others would throw away.

David's Faith in God. In his pure, courageous, noble youth; all through his hunted-down days; fallen and broken and full of the pains of hell; filling up his dreary gift of years,—David is always the same unconquered miracle of faith in God. Take and read and hear what David says to the Philistine giant about God, and you will see somewhat of his youthful faith in God. Then pass on to far on in his life, and open the Hundred and Thirty-Ninth Psalm; and I am safe in saying that David, the author of that Psalm, and Jesus of Nazareth, whom I may call the Finisher of it, have been the only two saints and sons of God on the face of this earth who have ever taken up, understood and imaginatively and unceasingly employed in their prayers that great believing Psalm.—Alexander Whyte, in Bible Characters.

Right against Might. A famous British admiral was once conferring with his officers as to how the enemy's fleet should be attacked. "Let us not forget," said one of his captains, "that we are greatly outnumbered in ships, in guns, and in men." "I suppose so," said the admiral, "but what has that to do with it?"

There is a great habit of arraying all the wrong and evil influences that are rampant in the modern world, and showing how helpless it is to try to set things right. But the reply of the admiral, wise as well as brave, remains in order. "What has that to do with it?" Goliath was undeniably larger than David, but it was not a question of size. The question was one of superiority. Does good vanquish evil, or can evil conquer good? History shows wave after wave of evil bearing down upon everything that good has ever planned, yet good has survived and asserted itself even more widely.—Condensed from an Editorial in Forward.

For Discussion. 1. What can destroy Goliaths? Onlookers thought Goliath could not be killed by battle ax, spear or sword. No one thought of pebbles from a brook till one of those pebbles did the work. Great wrongs and evils often seem undestroyable. Ordinary weapons seem useless against them. But there is always a weapon somewhere which can beat them. If it can't be done by force, it may be done by thought. "The secret of efficiency is the discerning of a chance where others despair, the utilizing of weapons which others throw away."

2. The literary charm of the stories about David's youth.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What must David have admired in Jonathan? 2. What must Jonathan have admired in David? 3. What is a friend? 4. How can one win friends? 5. How can one keep friends? 6. What is the basis of every true friendship? 7. What are the obligations of friendship?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY DAVID WAS NOT AFRAID

Beginning the Lesson. One summer Senator Beveridge and a friend were enjoying a vacation in the Maine Woods when the friend expressed a desire for something to read. "What's the matter with the Bible?" suggested Mr. Beveridge. "Oh, I don't want anything dull. I don't want to be preached to," replied his friend. "Why, the Bible has more good reading than anything I know of. What will you have? Poetry, adventure, politics, maxims, oratory? For they are all here," said Mr. Beveridge as he produced the Bible. At the close of the reading the listener remarked: "Why, I never knew that was in the Bible. Let's have some more of that tomorrow."

The next day a guide chanced to hear the reading and stopped to listen. The day after all the guides came, and the reading became a regular part of the day's program. Once, when the reading was delayed, "Indian Charley" remarked that it was "about time to have some more of that there Bible." When they wanted a story of adventure,—"one that would make their blood jump and yet uplift them," they turned to the seventeenth chapter of the first book of Samuel and read our lesson of today.

A Big Bully Beaten. "Come hither to me, ye dogs: come hither to me! You are afraid—you are all cowards. Come to me, and I will feed the black ravens with your flesh. Send out your biggest soldier, and I will lay him dead face downwards in the dust. No one will come, no one accepts my challenge. Ah, you have the faces of dogs and the hearts of rabbits!"

So Goliath flung his big words across the valley day by day, until every soldier in the ranks was afraid. One hardly wonders; for he spoke like a tempest and moved along the battle-line like a mountain of brass, with rattling armor and glittering helmet, and glancing spear and flashing shield. But in spite of his bigness and all his bluster there was one brave, bold heart determined to meet him in the name of God.

He could not understand why everybody had white faces. He said: "Afraid of this big bully? By the help of God I could knock him over. He's big; but I shall hit him all the more easily." He had hardly said the words, when his eldest soldier-brother snubbed him. "What are you doing here? Your work is sheep-minding, not soldiering; get away home at once." Brave big brother! He was a bit of a bully, too! This shepherd lad go out to fight a giant?—the boy is mad! Not so mad. Let's have a look at him.

That's where the bear clawed him. And those marks on his arms? That's his gold medal from the lion. He seems small for such a double fight. How did he manage? "God delivered me," he said; "that is the secret—and he will deliver me again." He is a curious youth; he won't have a suit of armor, a helmet, a shield, a sword—not even though they are the king's. He knows his own mind, at any rate. He will be just a simple shepherd; he will take with him just the sling with which he has many a time struck the wild beasts in the teeth. He did not learn that accurate aim in a day; but years of defending the sheep and the lambs from beast and bird had given aim and nerve and sinew and sting to every stone he hurled.

When the giant saw the lad he felt just as a lion does when it comes across a

goat-kid. "Why, you are hardly worth killing!" and he started boasting again. He had boasted against the army, and now he boasted against the ridiculous shepherd-lad; and he cursed him by his gods, and felt quite insulted at being challenged by such a bantam-weight as this. And the great big mass came on. And with a quick prayer, and a quick step, and a quick whirling movement of his left hand, there came crashing in upon the giant's forehead the well-aimed and fiercely-driven stone. The giant had just halted to have another laugh at the upstart challenger; it was his last laugh. He saw the shepherd's staff for beating off the wild dogs, and shook with fury and contempt; he never dreamed about the sling. The stone took him. He rolled over, and in a minute his boasting had come to an end. The shepherd, with a faith in God that lifted him above all fear and all pride, had saved his country by destroying the champion of their enemy.—Condensed from Twilight Tales, by Forbes Jackson.

Why David was not Afraid. He had conquered his temper. Read Eliab's irritating taunt in the twenty-eighth verse, and mark the fine self-possession of the young champion's reply! That conquest of temper helped him when he took aim at Goliath! There is nothing like passion for disturbing the accuracy of the eye and the steadiness of the hand.

He had conquered fear. "Let no man's heart fail because of him," he said. There was no panic, no feverish and wasteful excitement. There was no shouting "to keep the spirits up." He was perfectly calm.

And he had conquered unbelief. He had a rich history of the providential dealings of God with him, and his confidence was now unclouded and serene. He had known the Lord's power when he faced the bear and the lion. Now for Goliath! —J. H. Jowett.

How to Conquer Giants. We all have our giants which defy us and try to scare us. They look big and mighty and we do not always conquer them as David did his. There is the giant of Laziness, and he gets the better of many a boy and girl. There is the giant of Sulkiness, and he is a bad one. There is the giant of Mean Speaking. There is a whole tribe of giants. What is the name of your giant who is threatening you?

David killed his giant with a very simple thing—a stone in a sling. But David could not have done it so easily unless he had had a lot of practise. He had practised again and yet again, and had gone over it all over again—in season and out of season—until it became second nature to him. You see a skilful pitcher in a baseball team—he makes the ball go just where he wants it to go, and it all seems so easy. But you know, and I know, that that pitcher practises, in season and out of season, in order to do what he does. Practise makes perfect.

If you wish to get rid of the giants that would destroy you, practise with a sling and stones. David took "five smooth stones" out of the brook with which to kill his giant. We might call these five stones with which every boy and girl ought to practise: (1) "Be Honest and Square." (2) "Speak the Truth." (3) "Be Kind." (4) "Be Prompt to Do the Things You Ought to Do." (5) "Be True to God and Your Conscience." Practise with these stones, and continue to practise, and when a giant threatens you, you can usually kill him with one stone as David did his giant. David seems to have selected the fifth stone to kill Goliath, for he said—"I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts."—Henry T. Sell, in Sermons in Stories.

Sentence Sermons. The man who calmly expects to win has already begun to conquer: our mood has so much to do with our might.—J. H. Jowett.

Self-conquest is the greatest of victories.—Plato.

It is never too soon to get ready to do a great task.—Dr. John R. Mott.

The great secret of success is to be ready when your opportunity comes.—Lord Beaconsfield.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was it to Jonathan's interest to befriend David? 2. How does David speak of Jonathan's love for him in 2 S. 1.26? 3. What does Prov. 17.17 say about a friend? 4. What is it to be loyal to a friend? 5. Who are worth-while friends? 6. Who is the Friend of whom our Golden Text speaks? 7. How does Christ say we may prove our friendship for him? (Jn. 15.14.) 8. Note the opportunities you find this week to do something for your friends.

LESSON V—JULY 31

DAVID AND JONATHAN

GOLDEN TEXT: There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Proverbs 18.24

LESSON 1 Samuel 18.1-4; 19.1-7; 20.1-42; 23.15-18; 2 Samuel 1.17-27

DEVOTIONAL READING John 15. 9-17

1 SAMUEL 18.1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

19.1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. 2 And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: 3 and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee. 4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: 5 for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? 6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. 7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TWO FRIENDS, 18.1-4. David's victory over Goliath not only brought about the defeat of the Philistines, but gained for him a position at court and the devoted friendship of Jonathan, the King's son. Jonathan was present when Abner, the captain of the army, brought David, the victorious champion of Israel, into the King's presence. At once a beautiful friendship sprang up between David and Jonathan. They made a covenant together, exchanging pledges. Jonathan had the most to give. Nothing was too good for his new-found friend, for he loved David as his own soul, and stripping off his own robe he gave that to David and all his apparel, even to his sword, bow and girdle.

"The prime gain of friendship is just the knowledge of a noble soul. That was what Jonathan felt. David won Jonathan's heart on the day when he stood revealed in all the riches of his regal nature—that day when Goliath was slain. David was proved to be the grandest man of Israel, fullest of patriotism and beauty, courage and skill, and all his qualities were adorned and set off by his humility. As you read the subsequent history of that friendship you are very apt to think that David was the gainer, for Jonathan was a perfect miracle of tenderness, and was never weary of sacrificing himself for the interests of his friend; yet I conceive that that would be false judgment. I am certain of this, that Jonathan would not have agreed to it. David was by far the more splendid nature, and I expect that is what determines which is the gainer in a friendship. It is the man who has most in himself to give who gives most, not the man who has most of what is external to give" (James Stalker).

"Convey thy love to thy friend as an arrow to the mark, to stick there, not as a ball against the wall, to rebound back to thee; that friendship will not continue to the end that is begun for an end" (Quarles).

II. THE JEALOUSY OF SAUL, 18.5-9. Saul took David that day and would let him go no more home to his father's house, verse 2. (For the two accounts of David's introduction to Saul's court, see The Historical Background of the last lesson.) David carried himself wisely before Saul, and Saul appointed him over his men of war, his royal bodyguard, and this met the approval of officers and people.

Saul had been told by Samuel (1 S. 13.14) that his kingdom should be taken from him and given to another better than he, and he looked with suspicious eyes at any one likely to prove this promised successor. When Saul and David returned

from the slaughter of the Philistine the women came out of the cities to meet the king, dancing and singing and playing on timbrels and other instruments of music. And the words they sang one to another as they played were

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

Here was occasion indeed for anger and jealousy! "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?" And Saul "eyed David," looked upon him with jealousy, from that day onward.

"Envy and hate and malice of all sorts are not to be disposed of by argument and repressions. They can only be swept out of the heart by love. The only thing to do with excellence of any kind is to love it, be glad and proud of it, appreciate it as if it were part of your own possession, and it is if you do this. Hate makes a circle of contagion and infects everything; and love, too, makes a circle till we see nothing but love, think nothing but love, feel nothing but love" (Hugh Black).

III. SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID, 18.10-16. Saul had a disordered mind. When envy possessed him it drove him to murderous frenzy. "An evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul," we are told. The oriental way is to think of God as in control of all things, and therefore to speak of evil as well as good as coming from him. We speak of God as permitting evil: "God is responsible for the potentiality, not for the actuality of evil." As David was playing on his harp before him, Saul twice cast his spear at David, but the latter avoided it. Saul then looked upon David with awe, because "Jehovah was with him," and to remove him from his sight he made him captain over a thousand men. And all Israel came to love David.

Saul's life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service to his kingdom, but ruined by lack of self-control.

From bitterness preserve me, Lord:
From jealous thoughts protect my day;
Against the stroke of envy's sword
Help me to hold my way.
And grant my soul sufficient grace
To gladden at another's prize,
And look upon his eager face
With sympathetic eyes (Henry Robinson Palmer).

IV. DAVID BECOMES SAUL'S SON-IN-LAW, 18.17-28. After betrothing his older daughter, Merab, to David, Saul gave her in marriage to another. If Saul hoped that David would seek revenge and commit some treasonable act, he was disappointed. Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David and the king agreed that she should become David's wife on condition that, in lieu of the customary dowry due the father of the bride, David should kill a hundred Philistines. Saul hoped that David would perish in the attempt, but David carried out the order. Michal became David's wife, and thus David was raised to the position of prince of the royal family, second in rank to that of Jonathan.

V. THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN JONATHAN AND DAVID, 19.1-3. As David's popularity increased, Saul's jealousy knew no bounds. He openly sought David's life, even ordering Jonathan and all his servants to slay David. Commentators refer to Henry the Second's outburst of passion against Thomas à Becket as similar to this outburst of Saul's. That Saul so openly gave utterance to his murderous intent seems a forerunner of the insanity that came upon him later, for he well knew Jonathan's deep affection for David. Jonathan at once warned David of the king's purpose, and counseled him to hide in a near-by secret place on the morrow while he himself talked with his father about him. Jonathan may have wished David near so as to overhear the king's words and appreciate his danger, or at hand to become quickly reconciled to the king if that were the king's wish, or Jonathan's thought may have been that David must be near enough to be at once warned in case Saul could not be influenced in his favor. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

"Friendship is a strong and habitual inclination of two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other" (Addison).

VI. JONATHAN SUCCEEDS IN CHANGING SAUL'S PURPOSE, 19.4-6. On the morrow Jonathan talked with his father about David and showed him how unjustifiable was his hatred of David. Saul had no cause for jealousy, for David had always been mindful of Saul's interests, Jonathan told him. He had risked his life in combat with the Philistine, and through him Jehovah had wrought a great victory for all Israel. By ascribing the victory to Jehovah rather than to David, Jonathan allayed his father's jealousy. Then he recalled to Saul a happier mood when he had himself rejoiced in the victory over the Philistine. "Do not sin by shedding innocent blood," he urged; "why should you slay David without cause?"

Jonathan's words drove away for the time being the king's mad frenzy, and he became himself once more. Solemnly he declared, "As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death."

"The beauty of Jonathan's character is seen in his unchanging fidelity both to his father and to his friend, when they were alienated from each other. No harder task is set a man than to be true to two people who have quarreled. The effort is too great for most people, and they end by taking sides. The wonderful thing in Jonathan is that he remained true to David without deserting his father, and that he was loyal to Saul without being false to his comrade" (R. C. Gillie).

VII. THE RECONCILIATION, 19.7. Jonathan called David and told him the happy outcome of his efforts. Then Jonathan brought David into Saul's presence, and all was forgotten—for the time being.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, 18.4. It was most unusual for an eastern prince to give away any personal article. When Haman made his request for "royal apparel which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon" (Esther 6.8), he was asking much for the one whom the king delighteth to honor. "When the two young men entered into their covenant of life-friendship, they sealed it in a very characteristic eastern way, by the giving and receiving of garments. It was typical of that surrender of himself in love and service which Jonathan that day made."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When did Peter fail as a friend of Jesus?

Two Records. Our lesson immediately follows the last lesson. Verses 1-7 of chapter 19 seem to be an account of the same incident which is elaborated in the next chapter, and 19.8-10 to be a duplicate of 18.10-12.

The Place. It was in his palace at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin, that Saul made his attempt to kill David.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Do your pupils regard you as their friend? A large group of boys at a Y. M. C. A. meeting was asked the name and address of their Church school teachers, and a remarkably large percentage were not sure of either the name or the address of their teacher. Can such things be?

A Christian leader bears this testimony to one teacher's friendship: "As we think back, it is clear to us that the most fruitful part of our teacher's work was the friendly interest that operated outside the class. The invitation to tea; the book that was lent us; the social hour with the teacher's heart at leisure to speak a word of praise and encouragement; the visit in quietness; the country walks; and the homeward walk in the gloaming, when, perchance, the talk took on an earnest tone, and some quiet appeal was made for surrender to Christ; the discovery that some one was praying for us; the hand grip when first we made the great confession with beating hearts; the letter that came to us when away from home; the friendly word that influenced our employer to give us the first chance at work. These and a hundred other unrecorded acts of personal friendship, were the things that found us."

And there is the other side of the shield for the friendly teacher. Even though

some scholars never express in words their friendship for him, he can count upon it. The love of the teacher who wins the friendship of his pupils is repaid tenfold.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE OBLIGATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? Between a friend and a comrade? What is a friend? What will a friend do for another? What does Shakespeare say should be done with one whose friendship has been tried? What beautiful story of friendship between two women is told in the Bible? What is the most famous story of friendship between two men? Why were David and Jonathan such true friends? Which one do you admire the more? How did Saul try to break up their friendship?

Friendship at its Best. The fine friendship of a man for a man, or the gracious affection which a woman feels for a woman who is indeed her friend, becomes a noble form of human relationship.

It is easy for any man to fall in love with some beautiful woman—it is as easy as rolling off a log, and ever so much more delightful. It is easy for any man to inhale the sweet incense which arises from the devotion of some affectionate woman's heart. But where a man loves a man in an unsullied, unselfish friendship until his soul is knit with the soul of that man in an interlacing and interlocking of interest, then you have that harder, rarer form of human relationship which is rich with promise.

The young chap who is never quite happy with his fellows, who must always have some adoring young woman present in order to be content, is not quite all there. He is a "softy." He is lath and plaster where there should be quartered oak. He has more sentiment than principle; he has less muscle and more fat than go to the make-up of a virile manhood. The absence of the glamor and mystery which enters into all attachments between those of opposite sex clears the air for the manifestation of some of those fine forms of fidelity and devotion which belong to friendship at its best.

Jonathan, as the Crown Prince, had the least to gain and the most to lose by protecting the life and ministering to the well-being of this friend who might one day aspire to the throne. He made his affection a thing resplendent by its sheer unselfishness. He saw that David might increase while he would decrease, yet even so the sky of his affection was unclouded by a single touch of jealousy. How great is that love which envieth not!

And David in turn made his own adequate response to this magnanimous interest. He showed himself in his whole bearing a man worthy of the friendship of a prince of the blood. Heaven be praised for men who can find joy and satisfaction in the friendship of their fellows.—Condensed from Five Young Men, by Charles Reynolds Brown.

Make a Friend. Among the fragments of papyrus found some years ago at Oxyrynchus, in Egypt, there is this beautiful sentence, "And Jesus said, Make a friend!" Paul quotes a saying of Jesus that is not found in the Gospels—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"—let that be precedent for our accepting this other saying as a true one from his lips—"Make a friend!"

The Laws of Friendship. What are the laws? The wisest of old books puts them in a nutshell: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." In other words, people who wish to have friends must do their share in the transaction. They must go halfway, at least. They must not stand round waiting for people to speak to them, or hurry away without giving any one a chance to speak.

They must find pleasant things to say and kind things to do. They must make a business of friendship—that is, study its laws, watch for opportunities, invest, dare, and expect that success will take time, as it does in any other business. No one ever accused a climber of missing an opportunity. Let those who seek the real treasures of friendship be no less vigilant. Courtesy, returning social debts, planning to make people have a good time, are absolute necessities to those who would make a success of the business of friendship.

And let it not be forgotten that a bitter tongue is fatal. No one wants much to do with one who is always complaining or always criticizing. It often happens that a selfish person who is gay or "good company" is more popular than a person of more generous heart who is sensitive or critical.

In a certain woman's club there are two extremely popular women. One is beautiful, bright, magnetic, a natural leader. The other is plain, rather slow, possessed of nothing that could be called charm or magnetism; but she never thinks about herself. She is eager to help everywhere, is unfailingly loyal to her friends and generous in her judgment of other people. She cannot be hurt nor slighted, because there is no self to be hurt. "She is a brick," is the common tribute to her —a tribute to the intrinsic nobility of unselfishness.—The Youth's Companion.

Friendship Means Mutual Helpfulness. Friends are formed by weathering the same gales of fate together, by kinship of mind and heart, by common interest in a common ideal, by basic understanding, mutual dependence, thorough respect and loyalty that grows stronger as need grows greater. Acquaintances we may have many, but acquaintanceship is merely the grapes of possibility, from which the rich wine of friendship is aged and mellowed.

Some people like the dividends on friendship, but not its assessments. They really do not need a friend, they want a bank. When there is not mutual helpfulness—not necessarily the same in kind or in degree, but the helpfulness in which each gives freely his best to the other as naturally as a flower exhales perfume—the friendship is like a patent that is nearing its time of expiration.—William George Jordan, in The Crown of Individuality.

How to Gain Worth-While Friends. Would you have friends in the last years, you must pay premiums to insure that happiness. Pay now in the early and middle years by being yourself friendly, by showing that appreciation, that thoughtfulness that will turn casual acquaintances into staid and trustworthy friends. Would you have some one to stand with you in the trying hour; some one to put a hand under your load; some one more ready to give to you than to receive from you; some one who believes in you, when others refuse to do so; some one who cannot be separated by distance,—a brave, strong, gentle, true soul? Then pay now, in the passing days out of discerning love so that real friendship may be yours in the time to come.

You cannot pay up the premiums in bulk for happiness insurance. Quarterly payments through a period of years will profit you something, will buy you some insurance. But happiness insurance is best paid by daily premiums of loving thoughtfulness of those you know and love the best. Insure now for happiness tomorrow! —A. Eugene Bartlett, in The Joy Maker.

Good Counsel.

If thou knowest thou hast a friend
Whom thou well canst trust,
Go oft to visit him;
For with brushwood overgrown
And with high grass
Is the way that no one treads.—The Edda.

For Discussion. 1. Friendship between man and man.

2. Friendship between nations.

3. The higher friendship. See chapter with this title in Hugh Black's book on Friendship.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What reasons might David have given for putting Saul out of the way? 2. Why did David spare Saul? 3. Is it ever right to take vengeance for a wrong?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIND OF FRIENDS

Beginning the Lesson. The classic story of friendship is that of Damon and Pythias. Damon was condemned to death by Dionsysius, and received permission to return home and put his affairs in order while Pythias remained his surety, agreeing to suffer death himself should Damon fail to return. The day appointed for Damon's death arrived, and Pythias was about to be executed when Damon rushed breathless upon the scene. Pythias had been rejoicing that unfavorable winds had detained his friend and he could die for him, and Damon had been tormented with the fear that he might not arrive in time to save Pythias. So surprised was Dionysius

at such devotion that he freed Damon and begged to share in their loyal friendship.

The friendship of David and Jonathan is the most noted of all friendships. Jonathan was the son of King Saul, the heir to the throne, and David was his rival for the throne, yet this did not interfere with the devoted friendship of each for the other. Only a very noble nature can love a friend who is a rival and whose success means his own defeat.

David
From Statue by Michael Angelo

The friendship began after David had slain Goliath. How does our first verse say that Jonathan then felt toward David? What did he do in token of his love? Why did Saul wish to have David killed? What did Jonathan then do for his friend?

A Question for You. The question is, Can our friendships go the length that Jonathan's did? Can we be glad when our best friend at school carries off the prize we have worked so hard to win? Can we be glad when he succeeds at the price of our failure or loss? Well, it is very difficult, but there is just one way we can do it—by putting ourselves absolutely in the background.

There is a fine story told of the great English painter Turner. At one time Turner was on a committee for arranging about the hanging of pictures which were to be exhibited in London. At the last moment, when all the walls were full, a picture by an unknown artist came in. Turner said, "This is a good picture. It must be hung." But the other members of the committee replied, "That is impossible. There is no room for it." Very quietly Turner said, "I will arrange it." And he took down one of his own pictures and hung the new one in its place.

Don't you think that was a fine thing to do? It is the people who are truly great who can do things like that. Ask God to give you a big, generous, self-forgetting heart. Then, and then only, will you be able to be a friend like Jonathan.—The Children's Great Texts of the Bible.

Worth-While Friends.

"Friends are like melons. Shall I tell you why?
To find one good you must a hundred try."

Have you tried your friend? What is your proof that he is a good friend?

You have different sorts of friends, of course. Have you a friend with whom you always have a good time, no matter what the circumstances? Can you say this of all friends? Why is there this difference?

Have you a friend to whom you always go for comfort when things go wrong with you? Why?

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." What does that mean? Who, according to that, is your most faithful friend?

If you hold a piece of ribbon grass in your hand and rub it one way you find it as smooth as a piece of satin, but if you rub it the other way it is full of little prickers. So our friends "rub" us the right way or the wrong way. Have you not known how easy it is in the companionship of some friends to show only your good qualities, while in the companionship of others you are strangely tempted to be perverse and uncomfortable, if not worse? For most people there are certain friends in whose company only noble thoughts arise. The friend who makes you desire and determine to live nobly is your best friend.

Have you consciously tried to be the friend who calls out only another's good qualities, who helps him to do and to be the best that it is possible for him to be and to do?

How to Make and Keep Friends. Like most gracious things, friendship is alive and either grows or dies. It does not just happen. We must study to make friends and to keep them.

Friendship is one of three things that must be had and that cannot be bought. The other two are religion and health. Whoever heard of writing a check for a good digestion, or of ordering a hundred dollars' worth of truth, or of buying a friend? When Lowell sang, "'Tis only God may be had for the asking," he meant that certain great boons come only through seeking and asking and working. While you are young make up your mind to this: you cannot live a full, happy life without friends. They are essential—as essential as a clean skin or faithful prayers. Why is it, you ask, that some people are more popular than I am? If it is so, it must be for reasons independent of things. Friendship is not bought by soda water or automobiles; it is bought by character. A boy with a clean heart and tongue, a sense of fun, a sort of unselfish daring—such a boy will have friends. If you want to see what the world of thought says about friendship, turn in your Bartlett's Familiar Quotations to F.

Have you ever thought that friendship should be a spur as well as a solace? We should think quietly and constructively about other people's business. If mankind is our business, surely my friend's career should be my concern. Be a promoter of the ambitions and accomplishments of your friends.

In this great thrilling life of friendship we come to know some of the rules of the game. They will be big, general rules, befitting a generous subject; for you cannot always predict the prompting of the heart.

1. Take people as you find them. This common advice needs explanation. Most people are strange mixtures, wholly surprising, of the admirable, the commonplace and the bad. If you throw into the scrap heap all characters that have any single blemish or omission you will be lonesome; unless, in a moment of honesty, you fling yourself there, too. Why should we expect every one to suit us or to fulfill our ideal picture?

2. Go more than halfway. Give your all. This generous spirit in friendship, this lavish giving of self without hope of return, has been described as "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." If you measure your heart offering in inches and grams you will make no friends. "I will go halfway in meeting people," says the young pilgrim. That is never far enough, for friendship begins where personal interests overlap.—Condensed from an Article in The Youth's Companion by Samuel S. Drury.

Your Best Friend. Dr. J. R. Miller's creed, it is said, could be expressed in five words: "Christ and I are friends," and all who knew him felt that he lived in very close communion with that Friend. "Christ is our Friend: that means everything we need," wrote Dr. Miller in one of his books. "The consciousness that Christ is our Friend and we are his should check every evil thought, quell every bitter feeling, sweeten every emotion, and make all our life holy, true and heavenly."

And in a friendly letter Dr. Miller said: "What I want to help you to understand is that Christ is your truest and best friend. And you, being a Christian, are Christ's friend. That is, you have accepted his love, letting him into your heart, and have begun to love him in return. Religion really narrows itself down to a single statement—'Christ and I are friends.' Prayer is simply your talk with Christ as you would sit down with any dear, tender, close and trusted human friend for a little talk. When you realize that Christ and you are friends, close, tender friends —that Christ is your infinite Helper as well as your Savior—you will not have any trouble about prayers. You will be eager to sit down at his feet, as Mary sat, listening to his words."

Sentence Sermons. Beyond all wealth, honor, or even health, is the attachment we form to noble souls; because to become one with the good, generous and true, is to become in a measure, good, generous and true ourselves.—Dr. Arnold.

It takes two to make a friendship, just as it takes two to make a quarrel.

He is very rich who has Jesus for a Friend.—Thomas à Kempis.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What has happened to David between the last lesson and this? 2. What qualities does David show in our lesson story? 3. Should one "pay back" another who has wronged? 4. What does Prov. 25.21, 22 say about the way in which to overcome an enemy? 5. What does Paul say about overcoming evil in Rom. 12.17-21?

LESSON VI—AUGUST 7

DAVID SPARES SAUL

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12.21

LESSON 1 Samuel 26 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.31-39

1 SAMUEL 26.7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? 10 And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. 11 Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; 14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SAUL SEEKS DAVID'S LIFE, verses 1-4. David had taken refuge in the Wilderness of Ziph (see The Historical Background), and Saul pursued him with three thousand men. Through spies David learned of his coming.

II. DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE, verses 5-12. David came upon the place where Saul was encamped, and found Saul asleep surrounded by his followers within a barricade made by encircling wagons. David returned to his own men and asked, "Who will go down with me to Saul?" The proposed exploit must have appealed to all of them. Abishai, the son of David's sister, returned with David. They found the king still sleeping within the barricade of wagons, with his spear, the symbol of royal authority stuck in the ground at his head. "God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day," said Abishai to David, as he begged permission to kill Saul with his own sword. But David forbade. "Who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed and be guiltless?" he asked. There was a sacredness attached to Saul's office, and though David could not honor the man, he could honor the king.

We honor in our soldiers, not their worth as individuals, but the patriotic valor with which they fulfil their duty; should we not honor in our rulers, whatever their individual worthiness, the offices they represent?

With a solemn oath, "as Jehovah liveth," David declared that God would carry out his own purpose; Saul should meet his death as God willed, not as he, David, willed; Saul would die by a sudden stroke, or meet his death in battle (as he eventually did); God forbid that he should kill him. "It will be remembered that in the play of Macbeth, Macbeth starts upon his tragic career when the witches suggest to him that he is to be king. In the play the witches stand for supernatural forces. Macbeth can see no way of fulfilling the destiny predicted for him except through violence. The story of David is even profounder in its moral significance than the story of Macbeth. From a source which stood to the Israelites as supernatural, David, too, learned that he was to be king, but his spirit was large enough to turn away from the course which to one of the Macbeth type would have seemed the sure road to the fulfilment of destiny" (Bishop McConnell).

Taking the spear which was at the king's head, and the cruse of water as proofs of their visit, the two departed, and no one knew of their coming.

"Into how many sins have men been betrayed through unwillingness to wait for God's time! A young man embarks in the pursuit of commerce; but the gains to be derived from ordinary business come in far too slowly for him; he makes haste to be rich, engages in gigantic speculations, plunges into frightful gambling, and in a few years brings ruin on himself and all connected with him. How many sharp transactions continually occur just because men are impatient, and wish to hurry on some consummation which their hearts are set on! Have not murders often taken place just to hasten the removal of some one who occupied places that others were eager to fill?" (W. R. Nicoll).

III. DAVID DERIDES SAUL'S BODYGUARD, verses 13-16. Orientals can make themselves heard from a great distance, and as day began to dawn, David, from a safe place on the mountain top, called across to Abner, whose duty it was to watch over the king's life. "Who art thou that criest to the king?" Abner called back. With great sarcasm David answered, "Art not thou a valiant man? And who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over my lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord." How these words must have angered Abner! "The thing is not good that thou hast done," David continued; "ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head." With these words the objects were evidently held aloft, evidences of the fact that he who had taken them away from the side of the king could easily have taken the king's life instead.

IV. DAVID WINS FOR THE MOMENT THE HEART OF SAUL, verses 17-25. Saul recognized David's voice, and then David appealed to him and asked him why he persisted in pursuing him. He, David, had been driven away from the land of Israel. "Let me not die a violent death in a foreign land," he urged, and added that it was unworthy of the dignity of the king to hunt him who was so insignificant and helpless: "for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains," he said.

Then said Saul: "I have sinned; behold, I have played the fool; and have erred exceedingly." For the moment Saul was sincere, his better nature was aroused, and he promised that he would not harm David. When Tasso was told that he had a fair opportunity of taking advantage of a very bitter enemy, he replied: "I wish not to plunder him, but there are things I wish to take away from him—not his honor, his wealth, or his life—but his ill-will."

David did not believe that the king's feeling would be lasting. He bade Saul send a young man for the spear, and reminded him that, as he had spared the king's life, the Lord would reward him and deliver him out of all tribulation. "Thou shalt surely prevail," said Saul, and they parted never to meet again. Saul returned to Gibeah, and David fled to the Philistines.

Spear and Cruse

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, verse 11. The spear was held in hand when the king sat in his palace or held council with his officers (1 S. 19.9; 22.6); it was kept at his side when he sat at table (1 S. 20.33); it marked the royal resting-place in camp (1 S. 26.11). In the Land and the Book, Mr. Thomson says:

"I noticed at all the encampments which we passed that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that, when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or rests is thus designated. The whole of the scene in 1 S. 26 is perfectly natural, even to the deep sleep into which all had fallen, so that David and Abishai could walk among them in safety. The Arabs sleep heavily, especially when fatigued. Often, when traveling, my muleteers and servants have agreed to watch together in places thought to be dangerous; but in every instance I soon found them to be fast asleep, and generally their slumbers were so profound that I could not only walk among them without their waking, but might have taken the very *aba* with which they were covered. Then the cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance

with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over those deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place it at the bolster, so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening, and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous. The cruse is therefore in perpetual demand."

David stood on the top of the mountain afar off, and cried to the people, verses 13, 14. As a rule, the peasants have very loud voices, and, as the deep valleys which separate the mountains carry the sound very well, they call to each other across formidable distances. To call attention they call out, "Hay ya. . . . So and so, Hay!" And when the person addressed has heard, he answers "Hay." This calling is loud, but calm and distinct (to the ears), and they understand every word. The Hebrews also had very loud voices; the most remarkable, and seemingly unnecessary case, was when Joshua read the law to the people from Ebal to Gerizim. The case of Jonathan calling down to Shechem from the top of Gerizim is excusable and easy, as he had to tell his parable insulting Abimelech, and then flee southwards before the servants of Abimelech could climb the mountain (Judges 9.7-21). David calling out to Saul across the deep valley of Khreitun was the easiest task; the voice carries excellently there against the high rocks, and escape is easy.—Palestine Exploration Fund.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. On what occasion has Saul shown himself magnanimous? On what occasion has he shown himself repentant? How did Jesus say, in our second lesson of the year, that one should treat an enemy?

David at Nob. After the interview with Jonathan in the field near Gibeah, David led the life of an outlaw. He fled first to Nob, where "on the slope of Olivet, overlooking the still unconquered city of Jerusalem, all unconscious of the future sanctity of that venerable hill, stood the last relic of the ancient nomadic times—the Tabernacle of the Wanderings, round which since the fall of Shiloh had dwelt the descendants of the house of Eli." David was famished and unarmed and he besought Ahimelech the priest to give him the shew bread. Ahimelech was cautious, but David claimed to be on a secret mission from Saul, and the priest yielded, giving him five loaves of the sacred bread, which had been in the Tabernacle, and also Goliath's sword, which David had won and placed in the sanctuary. Whereupon the consequences for this little colony of priests were terrible, for Doeg, the Edomite, was present at the time, and later he informed Saul of the service rendered David. Saul ordered a ruthless massacre of all the priests and their households. Only Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to David. This incident is the only one in the life of David to which Jesus referred, using it as an example of the fact that the claims of humanity are greater than that of the ceremonial law. "Have ye not read what David did when he was hungry?" he asked. "How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shew bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?"

In the Wilderness of Judea. From Ahimelech David went to Achish, King of Gath, but fearing that Achish would slay him he feigned madness in order to escape. He found a hiding-place in the Cave of Adullam. Hearing of this, his own kindred and some four hundred men came to him, "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him." After taking his parents for safety to Mizpeh of Moab, he returned to Judah, to the forest of Hereth.

With his band of valiant men, now grown to six hundred, David rescued the town of Keilah from the Philistines, but fearing that the people whom he had saved would deliver him up to Saul, he left for the wilderness of Ziph. Here Jonathan came to him and "strengthened his hand in God." "Fear not; thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee," said that great-hearted friend whom David never saw again.

The Ziphites betrayed David's hiding-place to Saul, and he came in pursuit. Guided by Ziphite spies, Saul and his men almost surrounded David in the wilderness of Maon, but David escaped just in time. Fortunately, Saul was recalled to fight the Philistines. David and his followers took refuge in the rocks and caves of Engedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

The death of the prophet Samuel is recorded. Next we are told about David's request for food from Nabal, because he and his men had afforded Nabal's shepherds

protection, Nabal's curt refusal, his wife Abigail's gifts and intercession, the death of Nabal, and David's marriage to Abigail. He also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Meanwhile Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to one of his men.

Again the Ziphites informed Saul that David was hiding in their wilderness on the hill of Hachilah before the desert, and with three thousand men Saul came to capture him.

The Two Accounts of David's Sparing Saul's Life. At Engedi, Saul unknowingly entered the cave in whose farthest recesses David was hiding, and his men told David that Jehovah had delivered his enemy into his hand. But David refused to touch "Jehovah's anointed," and merely cut off the bottom of Saul's robe. When Saul left the cave David followed, and showed him his trophy in proof that he had spared his life. "Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil." This account has much in common with the sparing of Saul's life which is the subject of our lesson today. As it is unnatural that such an event should take place twice, it is probable that the two accounts are different versions of one event.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The story of Saul's hunt after David, and of David's narrow escape, becomes very vivid among these tossed and broken hills of Judea where the valleys are all alike and large bodies of men may camp near each other without knowing it," writes Dr. George Adam Smith in his Geography. "Ambushes are everywhere possible, and alarms pass rapidly across the bare and silent hills. You may travel for hours, and feel as solitary as at sea without a sail in sight; but if you are in search of any one, your guide's signal will make men leap from slopes that did not seem to shelter a rabbit; and if you are suspected, your passage may be stopped by a dozen men, as if they had sprung from the earth."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

David makes use of sarcasm with telling effect. What could be more irritating to Abner than the words: "Art not thou a valiant man? And who is like to thee in Israel?" With what better words could David taunt Abner for not having kept watch over his king? The opportunity was too good for David to lose; moreover, in this way by a very few words he could let his enemies know what he wished them to know. Tempting opportunities for sarcastic observations occur in every Sunday-school class, and especially where a teacher has one or two irritating pupils. But the use of sarcasm there is always fatal to a teacher's good influence.

"I have sinned: I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly," acknowledges Saul at the end of his conversation with David. Had David called Saul a fool, would the king have seen his folly? David first showed Saul a great kindness, and then challenged his sense of right, and the result was that Saul stood unveiled to himself. The former graceless way always arouses ire; the latter gracious way arouses the conscience. "The finest reproofs are born out of benefits."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Beginning the Lesson. The word *magnanimous* is derived from the two Latin words *magnus*, great, and *animus*, mind. A magnanimous person is a great-minded person. Webster defines magnanimous as great of mind, elevated in soul or in sentiment, raised above what is low, or mean, or ungenerous. All these phrases describe David. Great as David became as stateman, priest, prophet, and king, the qualities shown in those relationships do not appeal to us as much as does the greatness of soul which he showed in enduring Saul's persecutions and generously sparing Saul's life when it was in his power to kill him. Saul's slaughter of the priests at Nob, because they had befriended David, was more in accord with the spirit of the age than was David's sparing of Saul. David's victory over Goliath and the Philistines was a lesser triumph than his victory over the spirit of revenge.

The Magnanimity of Goldwin Smith. In his novel, "Lothair," Disraeli introduced an offensive caricature of Goldwin Smith. It was generally recognized and bitterly resented. "You well know," said Goldwin Smith in a letter to Disraeli, "that if you had ventured openly to accuse me of any social baseness you would have had to answer for your words; but when sheltering yourself under the literary

forms of a work of fiction you seek to traduce with impunity the social character of a political opponent, your expressions can touch no man's honor—they are the stingless insults of a coward."

At that very moment Goldwin Smith might have crushed and ruined Disraeli if he had cared to stoop to an act of revenge. He was about to write the life of Peel, and for the purpose of the book he had been entrusted with Peel's correspondence. There he found a letter from Disraeli to Peel abjectly begging for office, although Disraeli had declared in the House of Commons that he had never made any such request.

Why did Goldwin Smith refuse to publish the letter and crush his opponent? Why did he suppress all mention of it so that no one heard of it until, many years later, after Disraeli was dead, it appeared in the complete record of the life of Peel? He was an upright, honorable gentleman who could suffer attack but could not stoop to retaliation. And it was from Jesus Christ that men first learned this refinement of thought and nobility of conduct.—Frederick A. Atkins, in Life Worth While.

Magnanimous Lincoln. Said Emerson of Abraham Lincoln: "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong." That was a fine description of one of the most magnanimous men our country has ever produced. Dr. Hillis instances these examples of Lincoln's magnanimity:—

Douglas insulted Lincoln, but Lincoln gave Douglas a position of honor at his inaugural. Wendell Phillips called Lincoln the "slave hand of Illinois" when the first contest was on, but Lincoln publicly thanked Phillips for his work for abolition. In a suit in Cincinnati for the McCormick Reaper Company, Edwin Staunton opposed Lincoln and humiliated him grievously, but Lincoln forgave and forgot, and made Staunton Secretary of War. Chase was stung by his defeat and Lincoln's success in the race for nomination. Chase criticized Lincoln when nominated, patronized him in the White House, and plotted to wrest the nomination from him in 1864; yet, having received nothing but stones, Lincoln made Chase Chief Justice, and poor Chase was so bewildered that he wrote to a friend, "I cannot understand this man."

Bishop Fowler gives these particulars in regard to Lincoln's remarkable attitude toward Chase:—

Secretary Chase spoke of President Lincoln as "the old coward," "the old fool," "the old gorilla," "Congress ought to impeach him," and the like. All this was repeated to Mr. Lincoln. He answered it, saying: "This does not make it so, does it? Mr. Chase is a good secretary. The people believe in him and take his money. That is what we want, is it not? I think we will have to keep him at it."

Mr. Chittenden was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under Chase, and he gave Bishop Fowler this item concerning Mr. Chase's resignation. "I went over to Mr. Lincoln's office that morning and found Mr. Lincoln sitting there with his head down, his chin on his chest, evidently much depressed. He handed me a letter he had just read. It was Chase's letter resigning. I read the letter and felt overwhelmed, and said: "President Lincoln, you must hold Chase to it. You cannot afford to divide the party in such a time as this. You must hold Chase to it." Mr. Lincoln said: "Mr. Chittenden, Mr. Chase has determined the matter, and I will hold him to that." After a few minutes, without lifting up his head, he said: "Mr. Chittenden, Mr. Chase will make a good Chief Justice, and I will appoint him." Mr. Chittenden said: "I had long known and loved Mr. Lincoln but when I saw him that hour, under the sting of personal insult and under the shadow of threatened calamity, put that man into the highest place in the nation, for the good of the Republic, he went up and up and up into an atmosphere of which I never dreamed. He was the greatest man I ever saw."

Magnanimous Lee. The Youth's Companions tells this story about General Lee:—

Early in the war, before Lee had demonstrated his preëminence as the Southern leader, he was severely criticized on more than one occasion by a certain General Whiting. Whiting had stood at the head of his class at West Point, and was considered not only by himself, but by others, as a very bright and capable man.

One day President Davis, wishing an officer for some highly important command, called upon General Lee for advice.

"What do you think of Whiting?" asked Davis. Lee answered without hesitation,

commending Whiting as one of the ablest men in the army, well qualified in every way for even the most responsible position. One of the officers present was greatly surprised, and at the first opportunity drew Lee aside.

"Don't you know what unkind things Whiting has been saying about you?" he inquired.

"I understand," Lee said, "that the president desired to know my opinion of Whiting, not Whiting's opinion of me."

Good Counsel. Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged. Slight it, and the work's begun; forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself that is not above an injury.—Sir Thomas Browne.

For Discussion. 1. The difficulty of forgiving another whom you have injured.

2. The use of sarcasm.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How long had David waited to be made king by the people? 2. Why was the ark in the home of Obededom? 3. How was dancing regarded by the ancients? 4. What did David's dancing mean? 5. Why should a Christian be joyful?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO TREAT THOSE WHO WRONG US

Beginning the Lesson. Back in the days when David was a lad on his father's farm in Bethlehem, three other boys were living with him. Although these boys, Joab, Ashahel and Abishai, were about David's own age, they were really his nephews, the sons of a sister much older than he, for David belonged to a large family, you know. He was the youngest of eight brothers and had several older sisters. When David had to hide from Saul because Saul sought to kill him, he found a hiding-place in the Cave of Adullam. Many of his friends who did not like Saul joined him there—among them were Joab and Abishai. David's father and mother came, too, but as they would not be safe with him, he went with them to Moab and asked the king to keep them in safety.

All this time Saul was hunting David. The Ziphites, in whose wild country David was living, went to Gibeah and told Saul where David could be found. Saul came with a great army, 3,000 men, to capture David. David had only 600 men with him.

One night David and Abishai stole out to Saul's camp. They found it unprotected and every man asleep. They made their way cautiously through the camp until they came upon the wagons which were arranged in a circle. What was the purpose in this arrangement? Where was the king? What was at his head? It was a fateful moment for Saul. His life hung in the balance. And it was a fateful moment for David. He had to make one of the great decisions of his life.

Abishai loved David and was ready to go anywhere with him, and would gladly have risked his life for him. But at this moment he played the part of a false friend. He made an evil suggestion to David. What was it? "Now is your chance," he said. "You can get rid of your enemy and pay him back for all he has made you suffer. You need have nothing to do with it. I'll kill him, if you but say the word." But David resented the thought and shrank from the deed. "No," he said; "no, I will not take such an advantage of even an enemy, nor stain my soul with such a wrong." The two men, you see, took very different views of the same opportunity. Abishai said, "Here's a chance of getting square with our foe, of paying him back." David said, "No, here's a chance of being noble, of rising above all thought of revenge."

And how did David manage to resist this great temptation and act in such a noble way? Because of his fear and reverence for God. Saul was his enemy, but Saul was God's chosen man, God's anointed one, and David would not harm what God had chosen or destroy what God had anointed. If Saul had proved himself unworthy, he must be left to the judgment of God.

We are sure to have the same sort of chance. Sooner or later some one who has wronged us will be at our mercy and we shall be able to "pay him back." We can say a word, perhaps, that will cost him his reputation. But we will not do it if we think more of reverencing him who said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," than we do of our own revenge.

David's action, you say, was to his own disadvantage. It meant more persecution, longer exile, more years of misery. How do we know? The probability is that if he had let Saul be killed it would have set the people against himself, and would have brought him harder conflicts before he reached the throne. It not only saved him from greater troubles, but it showed him to be the better man of the two. How little poor, bitter, persecuting Saul looks beside David the Magnanimous! It saved David from a crime and stain that would have been a bitter memory all the days of his life. And it prevented a fine adventure from being spoiled. What a gallant thing it was, to raid that camp! What daring it showed! If those two men had come back stained with the blood of the king they would have been murderers, not heroes.

It always pays to be good to your enemy. If you don't gain by it in the long run, you find a great satisfaction in the thought, "I didn't pay him back, I spared him when I might have hurt him."

A Resentful but Magnanimous Dog. A gentleman who lived in Rome, had a Scottish deerhound called Eric. This dog formed a friendship with a large French dog. Eric would now and then bring his friend to his master's studio, where he was always very kindly treated. One day, when the gentleman was returning home from his studio, the two friends were attacked by a number of dogs, and there was a great battle. When the fight had continued for some time, the French dog slunk off and left Eric to finish the battle alone. This the plucky dog cheerfully did, and then went home to have his wounds washed. But the next day, when, as usual, the French dog called, Eric would not take the smallest notice of him. In vain the gentleman coaxed and scolded, and brought the French dog close up to Eric. He would not even turn his head in the direction of his former friend. This line of conduct he pursued ever afterwards, evidently thinking that he had been mistaken in the French dog's character as a gentleman, and must decline all further intercourse with him.—Nora S. Webster.

Vengeance Belongeth unto Me. A young man who had been insulted by another was resolved to have his revenge. He confided his plan to a friend, an old man. The friend tried his best to change the young man's purpose, but the poison of anger had so entered the young man's soul that he would not heed the words of his friend. Then said the old man: "You are determined to be revenged—well, I will say nothing further against it. But let us pray together before we separate." They knelt down and the old man prayed:—"It is no longer necessary for thee, dear Heavenly Father, to keep this young man under thy protecting care. He is in open rebellion. He will have his own revenge. And thou hast said in thy word, 'Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.' He will not heed thy command, but will take vengeance into his own hands. Now, dear Lord, since he will not listen to thy voice, let him go as he wills. But comfort me, dear Lord, for I am much grieved over the young man—I love him and my soul grieves over the course he is taking." Thus the old man prayed, and the heart of the young man was touched. He, too, began to pray. He prayed for pardon, and besought God to drive away from his heart the poison of anger and hatred and to give him a heart of love and forgiveness. The prayer was heard and the two enemies became firm friends.

Sentence Sermons. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.—Jesus.

In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it by, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon.—Bacon.

We hurt ourselves when we try to hurt others.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the account of how David learned of the death of Saul and Jonathan, in the first chapter of 2 Samuel. 2. Read David's lament over their death, in the same chapter. 3. What is the meaning of "We are thy bone and thy flesh"? 4. What is the meaning of "Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel"? 5. Of what was the ark made, as told in Ex. 37? 6. What did the ark mean to David? 8. Why did David have the ark brought to Jerusalem?

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: **We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, Thy holy temple. Psalm 65.4**

LESSON 2 Samuel 2.1-4; 5.1-5; 6.1-15; Psalm 24

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 84.1-4, 10

2 SAMUEL 2.3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

5.1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel.

6.12 And it was told king David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with joy. 13 And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. DAVID MADE KING OVER JUDAH, 2.3, 4. David went northward with all his household and his men, some six hundred of them (1 S. 27.2; 1 Ch. 12) from Ziklag, where he had been living with the Philistines as their vassal (see The Historical Background), and there settled in Hebron and in the cities round about Hebron. Thither came the men of Judah and anointed David king over the house of Judah. "How much choice they had in the matter is difficult to say. The master of a devoted band of seasoned soldiers was a very dangerous man to eject. On the other hand, the public defense was likely to be well attended to by such a man, and then David had always been well-disposed toward his own people" (Smith).

II. THE DUAL KINGDOM, 2.5 to 4.12. A period of seven and a half years is covered by the text omitted from our lesson, during which David was king of Judah, and Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was king of the Northern Tribes. During this time there were continual feuds between the rival generals, Abner on the north and Joab on the south, though we have the record of only one battle. David seems to have kept out of the contests. His power constantly increased, while that of Ishbosheth, who seems to have been only a tool in the hands of Abner, decreased. Then Abner made overtures to David to make the latter king of Israel. Perhaps Abner was moved by selfish motives, because he saw that Ishbosheth's star was waning, or perhaps he resented the suspicion of Ishbosheth that he was seeking the throne himself in taking to himself one of Saul's secondary wives. David demanded as proof of Abner's loyalty the return of Michal, Saul's daughter, for as the son-in-law of Saul David would be heir to Saul's throne. Abner seems to have compelled Ishbosheth to bring this about. Abner visited Hebron, was hospitably entertained, and departed, and then he was treacherously slain by Joab. Ishbosheth could not long maintain his kingdom without Abner. The disaffection grew, and finally Ishbosheth was stabbed to death in slumber by two of his captains. In great haste they carried his head to David as a welcome present, but they had mistaken their man. They met the same fate that David had meted out to the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul.

III. DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL, 5.1-5. Then all the Northern Tribes came to David at Hebron and gave three reasons for desiring him as their king. "We are thy bone and thy flesh,"—we are thy kinsmen, descended from the same ancestors, they said; David had been in times past their military leader; and God had said that he should be their shepherd. David made a covenant with them,

stating, no doubt, the duties and rights of the king and of his subjects, and was anointed king over Israel.

"All things come round to him who will wait" (Longfellow).

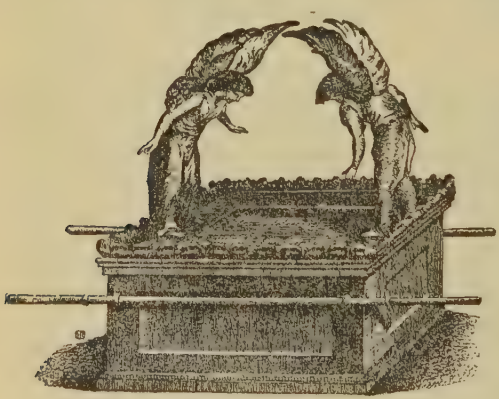
IV. DAVID MAKES JERUSALEM HIS CAPITAL, AND DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES, 5.6-25. Before the ark could be brought to Jerusalem David must have been firmly settled on his throne. It is impossible to determine the chronological order of the events of David's reign, but certainly his defensive and offensive wars with the Philistines must have first taken place, and probably his wars of conquest as well, before there came a time of rest in which he could turn his attention to his capital and to the ark. Many scholars place the events of chapters 10, 11, 12 and 8 before those of 6, 7 and 9.

As soon as the Philistines learned that David had captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem and united the Northern Kingdom with the Southern, they became aware that David was no longer a petty chieftain whose power they need not fear, and they "went out against him." Three combats with the Philistines near Gibeon are recorded, where they were so thoroughly routed that we never again hear of their troubling the Israelites.

David fills a larger space in Old Testament history than any other man save Moses. Later generations looked back to him as the model king. By conquest he extended his empire from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, making the Philistines on the west and the Edomites, Moabites, Aramæans and others east of the Jordan pay tribute to him. Even the king of Hamath on the Orontes sent him presents (2 S. 8.9-11). Towards the north David's rule extended as far as the Lebanons. On the northwest King Hiram of Tyre concluded with David a friendly alliance. On the south was the desert.

"It pleased God, in infinite love, to make David pass through a long time of hard discipline and salutary training for the office to which he was to be raised. How often do we find, in the biography of men who have been an honor to their race, that their early life was spent amid struggles and acts of self-denial that seem hardly credible, but out of which came their resolute character and grand conquering power!" (W. Robertson Nicoll).

V. THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO BRING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM. In the time of Eli the ark had been taken into battle where it was captured by the Philistines. The Philistines placed it first in the house of their god Dagon in Ashdod, then sent it to Gath, and then to Ekron. Grievous afflictions befell the people of every city to which it was taken, and the Philistines in terror put it on a new cart and sent it to the Israelites of Beth-shemesh. The men of Beth-shemesh were smitten for looking into the ark, which was contrary to the law, and they sent to the men of Kiriath-jearim to come and get it. It was brought into the house of Abinadab, and Eleazer, his son, was sanctified to keep it.



Ark of the Covenant
(After Calmet)

We hear nothing further about the ark until David decided to have it brought to Jerusalem. To the Israelites the ark symbolized the visible form of an invisible God. At the head of a great procession of chosen men of Israel David went to Kiriath-jearim (Baale-judah) for it. The ark was placed on a new cart and the oxen were driven by Uzzah and Ahio, of the family of Abinadab. Joyously the procession moved along its way to Jerusalem, David exulting with the rest and keeping time to the music of harps and psalteries, timbrels and castanets and cymbals. But their joy suddenly turned to grief and fear, for when the oxen stumbled Uzzah put his hand upon the ark to steady it,

and "God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God." His sudden death was considered by the people a vindication of the sacredness of God, and it taught the duty of reverential care for the ark, the symbol of God. Angry at himself, probably, for his failure to have the ark borne according to the law (Num. 4), and afraid to have it taken into Jerusalem, David had it carried aside to the house of Obed-edom. There it had remained three months, and Obed-edom and all his household had been blessed by its presence.

"As long as we have the Bible, we have the ark of the covenant. The most terrible and yet the most gentle of all books is the Bible! Law is in it, and mercy. It plagues the house and blesses it, as the house of Obed-edom was blessed when he received the ark of the Lord into his dwelling. It throws down the Dagon of false worship, of dishonest trade, of false appearances" (Joseph Parker).

VI. THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM WITH REJOICING, 6.12-15. Learning that Obed-edom and his household had prospered, David brought the ark to Jerusalem with great joy. Read the account in 1 Ch. 15 and 16. This time the requirements of the law were fulfilled. The ark was in charge of the Levites, and it

Procession of Musicians and Clappers

was carried up the steep, winding ascent on their shoulders: the fate of Uzzah was still in their minds. When they had gone six paces, and nothing had happened, David sacrificed an ox and a fatling as a thank offering that God was giving his sanction to the enterprise. And David danced before Jehovah—before the ark which symbolized the presence of Jehovah—with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. The linen ephod was the dress of the priest, and David was taking the part of the priest in leading the procession, arranging the sacrifice, and blessing the people (verse 18). Over the linen ephod he wore a robe of fine linen (1 Ch. 15.27), which he threw off in the course of his dancing. "The word translated *danced* seems to mean *whirled,* as in the devotional dances of the dervishes" (Smith). Women were the usual dancers on such occasions of public rejoicings, but David's intense joy and enthusiasm led him to take part himself in the dancing.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps, 1 Ch. 15.38.

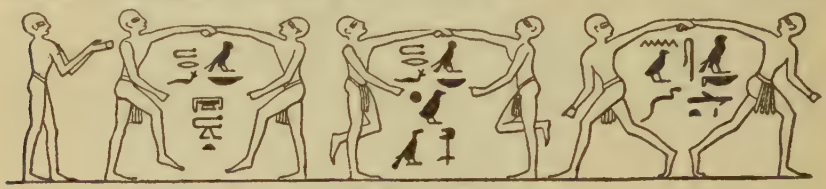
David forgot that he was king; he forgot that he was a warrior; he remembered only that he was a man rejoicing in his Maker, and he gave way to his emotions and danced, perhaps to the surprise of his people, certainly to the scorn of his wife. That the incident is recorded teaches us that there is a rightful place in life for the emotions.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

David danced before Jehovah with all his might, 6.14. Dancing grew out of an innate disposition, and even need, in the man of primitive society to express emotion,

or accomplish purpose in regulated bodily movements. It must have been communal man who began it, because, until there was such a thing, a thought or need of synchronous movement was not likely to arise. At the bottom of synchronous movement lies sympathy, and sympathy presupposes plurality. It is in harmony with this impulse, that in the earliest stages of civilization the world over, the dance became religious. That is its status amongst the civilized peoples of antiquity when we first read of them, and that is its status among the savages and semi-civilized peoples of today.

Even after the introduction of Christianity, dancing continued for centuries to be an element of religious worship among those who had espoused the new religion, as it had been a feature of the Greek mysteries and the Egyptian and Hebrew festivals. In some of the ancient churches of Rome there is still to be seen a raised floor at



Egyptian Dancers

which first at festivals but eventually every Sunday the priests performed their dances. In France, the custom of dancing in the churches endured till its legal prohibition in 1667; it still survives as an annual ceremony at the cathedral in Seville. —H. C. Krehbiel, in N. Y. Tribune.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When and by whom was David first anointed? How did David show his willingness to await God's time to bring him to the throne?

David at Ziklag. Realizing that after the revulsion of feeling certain to come to him Saul would be more hostile than ever because of his confession and of his own (David's) magnanimous treatment, David fled with his household and six hundred valiant men to his country's long-time enemies, the Philistines. Achish, King of Gath, welcomed him and gave him the town of Ziklag, on the edge of the desert south of Beersheba. David made raids upon the Amalekites and other desert tribes farther south, and brought the spoil to Achish as proof of his loyalty to his new master and hostility to his own kinsmen, for he pretended to Achish that his raids had been made in certain districts belonging to his own tribe and its allies. From day to day valiant Israelites came to him at Ziklag, so we are told in First Chronicles, until there was a great host with him.

When the Philistines determined to make a concerted attack on the Israelites, so great was the confidence of Achish in David that he ordered him and his men to accompany him and join in the attack. David obeyed and started with Achish. We wonder what would have been his course had he reached the scene of battle, but fortunately the difficulty was solved for him by the other Philistine princes, who doubted his loyalty to their cause and compelled Achish to send him and his men back. On reaching Ziklag again it was found that the Amalekites had taken advantage of their absence and burned the town, carrying off the women and children and spoil. David pursued them. An Egyptian slave of the Philistines aided him in finding them in the desert; his attack was wholly successful; he rescued the women and children and returned with rich spoil, a portion of which he sent as gifts to the elders of Judah and their allies.

Israelites and Philistines in Battle Array. Saul's Visit to the Witch of Endor. Meanwhile the Philistines had advanced through the Plain of Esdraelon and pitched their camp by the town of Shunem, on the southern slope of the Hill of Moreh. The Israelites had encamped at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, south of the Plain, near the spot where Gideon had had his camp, before his attack on the Midianites. The night before the last battle, Saul, feeling himself deserted by Jehovah, had gone around the Philistine camp to the northern slope of the Hill of Moreh, to consult the witch at Endor. He besought her to summon Samuel

from the dead. She claimed to do this, and Saul believed that the voice he heard was that of the prophet. The voice said that Jehovah had departed from Saul, that the battle on the morrow would go against him, and that he and his sons would perish. Utterly disheartened, the king returned to await a hopeless conflict.

Result of the Battle and Death of Saul and Jonathan. On the morrow the Philistines made their charge, drove the Israelites up the slopes of Gilboa, and utterly routed them. Brave, noble-hearted Jonathan and his two brothers were among the multitude slain. Seeing himself the mark at which the Philistine archers were aiming their arrows, Saul's soul revolted at the horrible thought of falling wounded into their hands, and he besought his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The armor-bearer refused his wish; when he saw Saul fall upon his own sword, he did the same, and perished with his king. Combining with this account that of the next chapter in Second Samuel, we suppose that Saul was leaning heavily on his sword, seemingly dead to the terrified armor-bearer, when an Amalekite, in search of spoil, came up and had no scruples in carrying out Saul's expressed wish.

The Royal Bodies Impaled; Rescued by the Men of Jabesh-Gilead. Darkness fell on the battle-field. On the morrow the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. Exultantly they cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor, and carried the bodies of the king and the princes to Bethshan and fastened them upon the walls. Saul's armor was finally deposited in their heathen temple, after it had been sent with Saul's head around to the Philistine cities to proclaim the news of his death, of the defeat of the Israelites, and also of the latter's flight from the near-by cities.

When the men of Jabesh-gilead heard what had been done to the bodies of Saul and his sons, they showed their devotion by crossing the Jordan at night and rescuing them from the walls of Bethshan. Returning to Jabesh, they buried them under a conspicuous tamarisk tree with all fitting honor, fasting seven days according to strict custom.

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan. Two days after his return to Ziklag from his pursuit of the marauders, news of the battle of Gilboa reached David through an Amalekite who had been on the battle-field. He brought David Saul's crown and bracelets, told him that he found the king leaning on his spear and at the king's entreaty killed him. Instead of the expected reward, he received death at David's hands for having killed the Lord's anointed. In memory of Saul and Jonathan, David composed a song of lamentation which afterwards became known as the "Song of the Bow," for the record says that David "bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow." Forgetful of his personal wrongs, David eulogized the king and his son in beautiful words which bear the ring of sincerest sorrow and affection.

His lament was also politic, for it showed him to the Israelites, not as the enemy but as a member of the house of Saul, and it must have won for him the loyalty of many friends of the royal house. He made no effort to seize the kingdom by force, but was content to wait, as he long had waited, till it should rightfully fall to him. How he became king of Israel our lesson tells.

The Date. David reigned about 1000 B. C. Remember that Abraham lived about 2000 B. C., and that the Crusades took place about as many years after Christ as David lived before Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Saul and Jonathan made their last stand against the Philistine army on Mount Gilboa. Bethshan, upon whose town walls the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened, was a Philistine city three miles west of the Jordan, between Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh. Jabesh-gilead was in Gilead across the Jordan, on an isolated, round-topped hill, in full view of Bethshan, if the identification of the site is correct.

From Ziklag, the town south of Beersheba given to him by the King of Gath, David "went up" to Hebron, fifteen miles south of Bethlehem, three thousand feet above sea level. Hebron was the chief city of the tribe of Judah, and therefore a fitting capital. It is one of the oldest towns in the world, famous in Bible history as the home of Abraham, and the place where Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob were buried. It was assigned to Caleb as a reward for his faith-

fulness, and it was one of the cities of refuge. Today it is called by the Arabs El-Khalil the Friend, for "The City of the Friend of God," Abraham.

Ishbosheth had his capital meanwhile, as King of the other tribes of Israel, at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok.

Jerusalem, the city of David, was originally the fortress of Jebus. On the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is called Ura-Salim, and it is therefore thought that the Israelites restored to it an ancient name. David strengthened his capital by building a new wall (1 Ch. 11.7-9), and erected for himself a palace of stone and cedar. To make it the national center of his kingdom, it must also possess a national sanctuary, and become the center of the worship of God. At this time the tabernacle was in one city, the ark in another, and both were neglected. The tabernacle had long been in Shiloh, but perhaps for a part of the time it was at Nob. The ark was at Kiriath-jearim. There were two high priests, Abiathar, the sole survivor of Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob, who had joined David when he was in the cave of Adullam; and Zadok at Shiloh, who had been with Saul and with Ishbosheth before David was made king of all Israel. David retained both high priests, had a temporary tent prepared at Jerusalem for the reception of the ark, until he could carry out his cherished purpose of erecting a temple for its abode, and then summoned the people for a great religious procession to bring the ark up to the capital.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

David was whole-hearted in all that he did, he threw his whole soul into every undertaking. His dancing "with all his might" on the occasion of bringing the ark to the capital was the expression of his zeal and enthusiasm and joy. Who has greater need of these same qualities—whole-hearted zeal and enthusiasm and joy in what he is doing—than a Church school teacher? You cannot make the most of your opportunity with your class unless you are throwing your whole soul into it; you cannot arouse your pupils to a realization of their obligation to the Lord unless you are yourself alive to these obligations; you cannot do your best for them unless you get joy out of your service.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

EXALTING GOD IN WORSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

The Reason for David's Attitude toward the Ark. The Ark was but wood overlaid with gold, but it was to David and all true Israelites a wonderful symbol. It stood for God's presence with them; it stood for everything they meant when they called themselves God's chosen nation; it stood for their religion.

We can bring home to us the thought of what it meant by these words of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson concerning the power of symbols:—

As soon as war was declared everybody believed in symbolism. Flags were immediately displayed. The streets of all our great cities were aflutter with them. The flag seemed to express more than it was possible to declare either in song or in speech. Patriotism loves to appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. Every spirit in the soul of man is fed by sights and sounds. The human heart is naturally fond of symbols. But men have been talking in many quarters against the foolishness of symbols. They have laughed at baptism as a foolish rite, and have steadfastly refused to participate in a ceremony so meaningless as that of the Lord's Supper. Of what value, men have asked, can be a few drops of water on the head, and of what significance can be a crumb of bread and a sip of wine? Such questions are asked by those who do not understand the power of symbols, and the place they have in the evolution of the moral life of mankind. But every patriot knows the value of a symbol when that symbol takes the shape of his nation's flag. It is only silk or cotton to the man who does not love his country, but to the heart that is

patriotic that flag ceases to be silk or cotton, it becomes the symbol of all that is most glorious in his nation's soul.

David's Warmth and Michal's Coldness. Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before Jehovah; and she despised him in her heart. Michal had no reverence for sacred things. She could not understand David's love and reverence and zeal for the sacred ark. To her cold nature David's enthusiastic expression of his joy was incomprehensible. What she could not understand she hesitated not to condemn.

Are we, perhaps, "too tame" in our worship? Dr. George Clarke Peck thinks some of us are. "Measured by our ideals," he writes, "the tribute of the first Palm Sunday was pathetically meager. Yet, meager as it was, it was far too extravagant for certain contemporary churchmen. As such men always do, they questioned the good taste of the affair. They were masters of decorums and proprieties. They knew how to measure enthusiasm in gills and inches. They cried out against excitement. Jesus's reply has not yet grown old: 'I tell you that if these should hold their peace, even the stones would cry out.' We are too tame, too absurdly proper, too disquietingly quiet. If our sires sang too loud, we err in the opposite direction. We have grown afraid of hosannas and waving palm-branches. When our Lord enters a city or an institution, or a heart, that entry is wonderful enough to justify acclamation. Perhaps, if we should let ourselves go occasionally, with the zeal of the Kingdom, we might help remind our neighbors that the King is approaching."

The Call to Worship. Is it not an uplifting thought that we are embraced in that great fellowship which, under various names the whole world over, is engaged in the worship and service of our common Lord? In great cathedrals, in frontier churches by the cross-roads, and under the banyan trees in pagan lands, they are bending in devotion to him.

And what of those who abide without? Is it not a dreary thing to stand alone in the great struggle? To feel that you have no part nor lot in this great brotherhood, this coöperative guild of prayer and sympathy? The Ancient Mariner speaks of his many weary years of wandering thus:

O wedding guest! This soul hath been
Alone, on a wide, wide sea,
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be

But the days of his loneliness are over. He has found the pleasant companionship of God's people and with it strength and comfort unspeakable:

O, sweeter than the marriage feast
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the kirk
With goodly company!
—David James Burrell, in The Spirit of the Age.

Exalting God in Worship.

Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands,
Serve Jehovah with gladness;
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise;
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
For Jehovah is good; his loving kindness endureth for ever,
And his faithfulness unto all generations.—One Hundredth Psalm.

Making Worship a Real Factor in the Lives of Boys and Girls. The interest, attendance, order, and spirit of worship are very much improved by the plan of having a pupil committee plan and conduct the program of worship in the Church school. Rarely is a pupil found who is unwilling to serve.

Programs planned and conducted by pupils are likely to be inferior to those conducted by adults. Yet this is no proof that they are less effective. Even the most labored and halting prayer by a pupil will probably have a greater

effect on him than if he had but passively listened to a smooth and well-phrased prayer by an adult leader. Coming as it does from one of their own number, it may also have a greater influence on his fellow pupils.

Close supervision is an essential element in all successful pupil-government. It is the function of the adult adviser on this committee to supply the principles of program construction and to help the committee to cast its efforts into proper form. Great leadership ability is required to give the proper amount of guidance without domination to the extent of discouraging initiative.

Eternal vigilance must be exercised to keep the programs within the allotted time. —Condensed from an article in Religious Education by Paul H. Vieth.

Let God Be Exalted in Individual and National Life. The true ordering of a nation is around one common center; and the people prosper whose heart responds to the idea of Unity, Order, and Religion. The people are the source of authority. Whatever is the purpose and will of a nation must shape its destinies. How important therefore that the fabric should be founded on the will and recognition of God, and that whatever changes may be necessary should be because the popular voice has spoken through approved representatives.

We must be reverent. God is our Father, but in prayer and religious worship we must remember his greatness and holiness.—The Christian.

For Discussion. The different attitude of David and Michal. Enthusiasm and coldness in religion. The place of emotion in religion.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What reasons may be given for the inadvisability of David's building the temple? 2. In what spirit did David accept Nathan's announcement? 3. Did the purpose honor David in God's sight as much as would the achievement? 4. What lesson is there in this for us? 5. How long did David's own line remain on the throne? 6. In whom was the promise made to David fulfilled of his throne being established for ever?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO WORSHIP GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Many years have passed since David was called and set apart for the kingship. They have been years of hardship, suffering and persecution; years when hope almost died, and the kingship seemed an impossibility. But the long waiting time was over at last, and David became the king of all Israel. How did this come about?

The Ark of God Brought to Jerusalem. David honored God by honoring the ark which symbolized God's presence. It had long been kept in the house of Obed-edom, and David wanted it in his capital. A large crowd of shouting, rejoicing people, watched it as it was carefully carried on the shoulders of priests into the city of Jerusalem. The musicians played, the choir sang, and David in his enthusiasm sang and danced at the head of the procession.

How do you feel when you hear merry music? Don't you want to sing and dance about? When the organ is played in church, how solemn and quiet you feel! When the band marches along playing national airs, you feel patriotic and brave. They had strange instruments of music in the days we are studying, and their playing made every one rejoice. Yet David's wife Michal, watching from a window of the palace, frowned upon David. She did not understand his love and reverence for the ark, she had no sympathy with his purpose in bringing it to Jerusalem, and she could not understand his joy.

When the ark was at rest in the tent where it was to stay until the temple could be built, worship and sacrifice followed. Good things were distributed to the people, and they returned to their homes happy and content. David, I think, slept well, too, that night. The symbol of God's presence was in the city, and all was well.

The Worship of Song that God Hears. There is an old story about the brothers in a monastery "somewhere in France" long ago. Try as hard as they would, the music in their services was a failure; and it became a great grief to them that only in their hearts could they "make melody to the Lord."

One day a traveling monk came by and asked for entertainment; and to the great joy of all the monastery he proved to be a wonderful singer. High and sweet and clear his voice soared over all the other voices. And one by one the rest of the

monks stopped singing to listen, until finally the visiting brother sang alone. No envy, however, filled the hearts of the good brothers in the monastery. Instead, they rejoiced with each other that now at last they could have beautiful music in their chapel services, and they planned to keep the traveler with them always.

But that night an angel came to the abbot in a dream. "Why was there no music in your chapel tonight?" he asked. "Up in heaven we always listen for the beautiful music that rises from the services in your monastery; and tonight we were sadly disappointed."

"Oh, you must be mistaken," cried the abbot. "Ordinarily we have no music at all that is worthy of your hearing; but tonight we had a trained singer with a wonderful voice. He sang the service for us, and it was so sweet that we all stopped to listen. For the first time in all these years our music was beautiful."

The angel smiled. "And yet, up in heaven we heard nothing," he said softly.—The Youth's Companion.

In What Spirit Do you Go Where God Is Worshiped? The captain of a whaler went ashore one Sunday and attended a church service. The minister spoke to him after the sermon, and found that no impression had been made upon his mind. "The fact is, sir," the captain acknowledged, "all the while you were preaching I was thinking about where I should be likely to find a whale. There is no room in my heart for anything but whales." The one who recounts this conversation added: "We are not surprised that a whale should take up a good deal of room in a man's heart; and if all were equally honest, they would confess that the real reason that the service of the sanctuary did them no good was that their hearts were too full of business to listen."

The spirit in which you go to church largely determines the manner in which you worship there and the help which the service is to you. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God," and on the way put out of your mind all the things which must occupy it so constantly during the week, for you are drawing near to God, your Heavenly Father.

"Remember it is the house of God;
Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful."

There is little outward irreverence in our churches, but could you read the thoughts of the worshipers, would you find them always reverent?

How to Worship in God's House.

Glad in the House of God,
Upon his holy day,
We lift our hearts in song,
His wondrous praises say;
And while we sing, he hears,
And when the song is done,
Oh, very, very near he seems
To every listening one.

Low in the House of God
Upon his peaceful day,
With bended heads we kneel
Our earnest prayers to say;
And while we pray, he hears,
And close, so close he comes,
That all the way he walks with us
Back to our happy homes.—Nancy Byrd Turner.

Sentence Sermons. The Sabbath bell is an invitation to all to come together as children of the Father and unite in listening to his word and in voicing common worship and praise.—Harris T. Farnell.

Reverence is treating worthy things worthily, and the most worthy things the most worthily.—James G. K. McClure.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What can you learn about Nathan? (See The Subject Index of your Bible.) 2. What argument does Haggai give in 1.3 for rebuilding the temple which is similar to David's reason for wishing to build it? 3. What other reason does 1 Ch. 17 give for David's not being allowed to carry out his plan? 4. What reason is given in 1 K. 5.3; 1 Ch. 22.8; 28.3? 5. Read David's words after Nathan's announcement as recorded in 1 Ch. 17.13-27.

GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Hebrews 1.8

LESSON 1 Chronicles 17 DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 1.8-12

1 CHRONICLES 17.1 And it came to pass, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah *dwelleth* under curtains. 2 And Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thy heart; for God is with thee. 3 And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith Jehovah, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in: 5 for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel, unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another.* 6 In all places wherein I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to be shepherd of my people, saying, Why have ye not built me a house of cedar? 7 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people Israel: 8 and I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast gone, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth. 9 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the first, 10 and *as* from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I will subdue all thine enemies. Moreover I tell thee that Jehovah will build thee a house. 11 And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. DAVID PLANS TO BUILD A TEMPLE, verses 1, 2. When David was at peace with his enemies, he began to consider what next he could do for his kingdom. To Nathan, the prophet, he told the plan which he had probably long cherished. He himself was dwelling in a house of cedar, he said to Nathan, but the ark of God was housed under curtains, in a tent made from goat's hair. Compare Haggai's argument for rebuilding the temple, in Haggai 1.4. "David was an old man when he spoke these words, but old age had not chilled him as it so often does. It had not made him cynical nor selfish, as if there were nothing worth caring for but his own comfort. There is the ring of enthusiasm about his words, the note of resolve that nothing could be too splendid to be lavished on the house of the Lord of Israel" (E. H. Morrison).

David's plan seemed to Nathan good, and he told the king to do all that he desired to do, for God was with him.

"The Lord demands my best. I will not keep the house of cedar and offer him the fragile tent. He shall have the cedar. I will offer him my best! He shall have the best of my time. So often I give him the fag-end of the day. I give him the moments of weariness, the remnant of the hour when I am quite worn out. I keep the best for business. Henceforth I would give him my brilliant moments. I would sacrifice 'the springs of the day' to his glory. He shall have the best of my powers. I do so often put my whole self into my pleasures, and only a fragment into my worship. My sacrifice is not a 'whole burnt offering.' Lord, 'take my all'! Graciously incline me to consecrate my best" (J. H. Jowett).

II. DAVID'S PLAN FRUSTRATED, verses 3-6. After Nathan had thought over the situation and had taken counsel with God, he came to David with a different message. It was not God's will that he should build him a house, he told the king. God's house had long been deferred, there was no haste now. Another reason is given in 1 Ch. 22.8; it was not fitting for the temple to be built by David because he was a man of war. Yet other reasons may have been that the affairs of the kingdom were not yet sufficiently settled to permit David to devote the necessary energy to building a temple (1 K. 5.3), and that it would require all the time and resources at David's command merely to collect materials for the temple.

"I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God," said David when, an old man, he resigned the kingship into Solomon's hands. He was not allowed to build the temple, but he gathered the materials which Solomon used in its building. It may not be ours to do a great work for God, but it is our duty to do what God lets us do.

"Others shall sing my song,
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win.
What matters I or they,
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said,
And life the sweeter made" (Whittier).

III. THE COMFORTING PROMISE, verses 7-12. Nathan's special message for David contained a reminder of how God's presence had been with him from his life as a shepherd till he became king and conquered his enemies, and an assurance that God would continue to be with him and would make his one of the greatest names in the earth, and that God would be with his people Israel, subduing their enemies and giving them peace. The crowning promise of all, the heart of the whole message, was that David should be the founder of a permanent dynasty and a descendant of his should build the temple, whose throne should be established for ever. The last promise was fulfilled in Christ, whose reign is from everlasting to everlasting: recall Luke 1.32, 33.

"When did God take anything from a man, without giving him manifold more in return? Suppose that the return had not been made immediately manifest, what then? Is today the limit of God's working time? Has he no provinces beyond this little world? Does the door of the grave open upon nothing but infinite darkness and eternal silence? Yet, even confining the judgment within the hour of this life, it is true that God never touches the heart with a trial without intending to bring in upon it some grander gift, some tenderer benediction" (Joseph Parker).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I will set up my seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom, verse 11. To appreciate the value of this promise for the future, we must have in mind the great insecurity of new dynasties in Eastern countries and the fearful tragedies that were often perpetrated to get rid of the old king's family, and prepare the way for some ambitious and unscrupulous usurper. We hardly need to recall the tragic end of Saul, the base murder of Ish-bosheth, or the painful deaths of Ashael and Abner. We have but to think of what happened in the sister kingdom of the ten tribes from the death of its first king, Jeroboam, on to its final extinction. What an awful record the history of that kingdom presents of conspiracies, murders and massacres!—W. G. Blaikie.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first King of Israel? What did he do for his country? What has David done? What did we learn in the First Quarter about our duty as stewards?

The Extent of David's Kingdom. After conquering the Philistines, David turned his attention to subduing, one by one, the foes that encircled his kingdom—the Moabites, Endomites, Amalekites, Ammonites, and the Aramæans of Zobah farther north—till he held sway from Philistia and Phœnicia on the seacoast to the Arabian desert on the east, and from the Red Sea on the south to the Lebanons on the north, and even the people beyond Mount Hermon and about Damascus paid tribute to him. See the full page map.

The Three Periods of David's Life as King. David's rule naturally divides into three periods: first, a period of war and conquest; second, a period of peace and prosperity; and third, a period of domestic troubles. While the time of this lesson is not known, it is natural to assume that it was during the second period. The place is Jerusalem.

The Books of Chronicles. In the Septuagint Version of the Bible these books are called the First and Second Books of *Omissions,* which is the literal meaning of the Greek term. The books contain information omitted in Samuel and Kings in regard to the worship of the Israelites, as well as a repetition, somewhat enlarged, of portions of these books. They furnish a history of the worship of the Israelites from the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus permitting the rebuilding of the temple, where the Book of Ezra takes up the history. They give a full account of everything bearing upon the true worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem.

The record of David's life is largely taken up with an account of his plans and preparations for the temple. It is the ideal David, whose supreme purpose was the worship of the Lord, who is here portrayed, while in Samuel we have a graphic account of the real David with all his failings writ large. Three hundred to two hundred and fifty B. C. is the date commonly assigned to the writing of Chronicles, and during the six or seven centuries that had elapsed since David's life he and his reign naturally became idealized, till the name of the sweet singer of Israel was associated only with the deepest religious experiences. The account of Solomon's building and dedication of the temple given in Kings is repeated and expanded in Chronicles.

The last eight chapters of First Chronicles are an account of David's preparations for the building of the temple which he himself could not erect. Chapter twenty-nine tells of David's own gifts and of his appeal to the people to give generously.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Not failure, but low aim is crime": this is the thought greatly needed by probably the majority in your class. Keats, when dying, cried: "My name is writ in water." Conscious of his inability to create something perfect, he had said that "There is no fiercer hell than failure to accomplish a great purpose." "Ah, yes, there is!" exclaims a great admirer of Keats: "The fiercer hell would have been the surrender of that purpose. He might have become John Keats, M.D., with a neat door-plate on a London villa—that would have been failure indeed, for he would have cast away his most precious gift. It is better to fail in a high ambition than to succeed in a low one."

Hundreds of men in India write after their names, "Failed B. A." or "Failed M. A.," meaning thereby that they tried for the degree of bachelor or master of arts and did not get it. They are not proud of the failure, but they wish others to know that they tried to win the coveted honor and are better satisfied with themselves than they would be had they not worked for it. It was David, Failed T. B. (temple builder), but he was assured that he did well in that it was in his heart.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THOU DIDST WELL THAT IT WAS IN THY HEART

Beginning the Lesson. "Lo, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah dwelleth under curtains." There should not be such disparity, David thinks, between his manner of living and the manner in which the ark, God's symbol, was housed. Is not this the underlying principle of all right giving, that there should be no such disparity between what we lavish on ourselves and what we give to God? Jesus sat over against the treasury and watched the givers, and perceived that the widow who cast in her two mites gave more than all the rest, for she gave all that she had. It is not the amount that we give, but the amount that we have left, which determines the generosity of our giving.

David's Desire Was Counted to him for Righteousness. In his address to the people after the placing of the ark in the temple which he had built, Solomon said: "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. But Jehovah said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart; nevertheless thou shalt not build the house." (1 Kings 8.17-19.) Thou didst well that it was in thy heart. "Good but wished with God is done." David was not permitted to build the temple, but his sincere desire to honor God was counted to him for righteousness as much as if he had carried out his purpose. Is not this a comforting thought for every one of us?

"It is well to know that attempted things,
Are counted and crowned by the King of Kings."

Desire and Effort Count. How many unfulfilled desires and unsuccessful efforts there are even in honest and earnest lives! Yet the desire and the effort count. That is the lesson for us. The Lord accepts and honors them, that is a comfort. Spiritual and mental scheming, planning, dreaming, or castle-building are not the things which God accepts. Plans and schemes count for little. It was not what was in David's mind, but only what was in his heart, which God accepted and commended. We are so often prevented from doing what we had set our hearts upon doing that it is a blessed comfort to know that our Father considers our hearts more than our hands. We cannot all of us bear the pleasure and the pride of success. Defeats are less dangerous and are sometimes better, holier, and higher than successes. As Lowell says, "Not failure, but low aim, is crime." We are hampered and hindered and prevented as to what our hearts impel us to do. We do so little compared to what we mean to do. In reading the life of M. Angelo, the one thing which impressed me most was the largeness of his desires and plans compared with his actual accomplishments. There were so many things in his great heart which never got into buildings, marbles, or frescoes. It has been so with all great lives. Browning says, "What hand and brain were ever paired?" and we might say, What heart and hand were ever paired? Let us take comfort in the thought that God knows our hearts and counts our desires as more and better than our deeds.—Thomas A. Hastings, in Union Seminary Addresses.

Browning's Encouraging Philosophy. Browning is the thinker above all others who earnestly preaches that purpose is more than accomplishment.

> "What stops my despair?
> This! 'tis not that man *Does* which exalts,
> But what man *Would do!*"

And again he says:

> "The beginning shall suffice;
> The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life."

This is his philosophy both in the realm of action and in the realm of being:

> "Aspire, break bounds. I say,
> Endeavor to be good, and better still,
> And best. Success is naught, endeavor's all."

David Proposed and Solomon Executed. Samuel Wesley, Senior, conceived a broad and comprehensive scheme for the complete evangelization of the East; and embraced in its contemplated range the conversion to the faith of Christ of all Jews, Mohammedans and heathen, who might be reached by the evangelical agency of the Church of England, in the vast regions which lie between St. Helena and Abyssinia, the East Indies and China. Such was the magnificent plan devised by this earnest divine. The grand scheme was laid in writing before the Archbishop of York, and Wesley nobly offered to devote his life to carrying it out, provided his countrymen would furnish him with means. The glorious enterprise was never commenced, and Wesley must have felt deep grief to see his grand aspiration end so untimely. But the house that Samuel Wesley could not build, his son John built. Not a temple for the worshiping East alone, but a house of which it may be said:

> "To this the joyful nations round,
> All tribes and tongues, shall flow."—W. L. Watkinson, in Mistaken Signs.

Look for the Compensations of Life. Robert Chambers, in Orchard Land, puts these words into the mouth of a blind bat:

"Can you hear the rustle of a small moth creeping over the goldenrod across the brook? I can I hear the almost soundless step of a tiger-spider on the stone wall. I hear, deep in the earth, the stirring of a tiny grub, eating soft, juicy roots. I hear, high in that apple tree, the gentle breathing of a sleeping robin on his nest. I have one sense that is entirely denied to indoor folk—the sense of the nearness of things. I can fly like a flash through thickets of leaves so dense that scarcely any light penetrates, and I never touch a leaf or a stem. It is not touch nor smell that prevents my tearing my thin, fragile wings against the briars of thorny thickets. It is an extra sense, the sense of nearness, for blind bats can dart through bramble thickets as easily as bats who have eyes."

"May we not be as serenely content," adds the Homiletic Review, "as this little blind animal with the advantages that are ours? Instead of enjoying the sense that guides him through the thicket, how easily he might spend his life, as some human beings do, repining that he has not as many eyes as the spider!"

For Discussion. 1. Because you cannot complete a work, that does not absolve you from doing your share of it.—The Talmud.

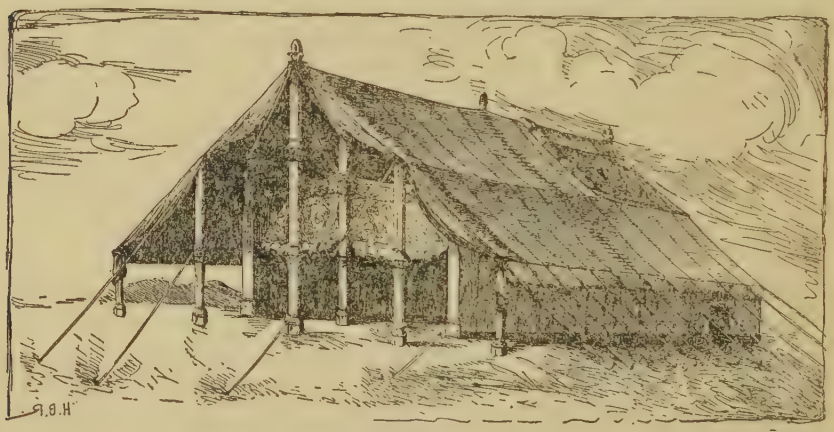
2. The pacifist note in the Old Testament. The incompatibility of war-making with temple-building.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was David as guilty of the death of Uriah as he would have been had he killed him with his own hand? 2. What qualities does Nathan show in this lesson? 3. Define repentance. 4. By what beautiful parable did Jesus show the readiness of God to forgive? 5. Can God forgive the unrepentant?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW GOD GIVES US THE BETTER THINGS

Beginning the Lesson. David sat in his new palace at Jerusalem. Of what beautiful wood was it made? He felt that it was not right for him to use the abundant means at his command for his own comfort and pleasure alone, but wished



The Tabernacle
The tent in which the ark was housed

to use it for the benefit of his people, and above all, for the honor and glory of God. He had exchanged a tent for a palace, but the ark of God was still housed in a tent just as it had been in the early days when all the people dwelt in tents. "I do not understand the feeling," says Ruskin, "which would arch over our own gates and pave our own thresholds and leave the church with its narrow door and foot-worn sill; the feeling which enriches our own chambers with all manner of costliness, and endures the bare wall and mean compass of the temple."

Spending for Self versus Giving for God's House. A man who was trying to raise money for a church building relates this experience:—

"The first man I met said he was very sorry, but the fact was, he was so involved in his business that he couldn't give anything. Very sorry, but a man in debt as he was owed his first duty to his creditors. He was smoking an expensive cigar, and before I left his store he bought of a peddler who came in a pair of expensive Rocky Mountain cuff-buttons.

"The next man I went to was a young clerk in a banking establishment. He read the paper over, acknowledged that the church was needed, but said he was owing for his board, was badly in debt, and did not see how he could give anything. That afternoon, as I went by the baseball grounds, I saw this young man pay

fifty cents at the entrance to go in, and saw him mount the grand stand where special seats were sold for a quarter of a dollar.

"The third man to whom I presented the paper was a farmer living near the town. He also was sorry, but times were hard, his crops had been a partial failure, the mortgage on his farm was a heavy load, the interest was coming due, and he really could not see his way clear to give to the church, although it was just what the new town needed. A week from that time I saw that same farmer drive into town with his entire family, and go to the circus, afternoon and night, at an expense of at least four dollars.

"The Bible says, 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' but it says also, 'By their fruits ye shall know them!' And I really could not help thinking that the devil could use that old excuse, 'in debt' to splendid advantage, especially when he had a selfish man to help him."—The Youth's Companion.

God Gave David Better Things. David told the prophet Nathan about his great desire to build a house for Jehovah. What did Nathan say? What different message did he bring David the following day? Why?

Nowhere does David appear to better advantage than in his acceptance of God's refusal. He had offered to honor God by building him a temple. It was a plan on which he had set his heart, a plan which, at first thought, had seemed good to the prophet Nathan. "Do all that is in thy heart, for God is with thee," Nathan had said, but Nathan's word the next day was otherwise: "Thus saith Jehovah, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in."

If you have ever had a plan which you very much wanted to carry out, a plan for others which has seemed good to you, and then the plan has been thwarted, you know something of David's disappointment. And David's disappointment was all the keener because he had been encouraged to believe that God was with him in his purpose.

David did not rebel. "He went in and sat before Jehovah" and talked with him as a child would talk to his earthly father. He believed in God's wisdom, and goodness, and promises. His prayer was full of gratitude to God for his past goodness to him, and of exultant faith in his promises of greater kindnesses yet to be granted him. Solomon, his son, in dedicating the temple which he built, could say: "There hath not failed one word of his good promise"; David in renouncing his wish to build the temple, could say: "Thou, O Jehovah, hast blessed, and it (his house) is blessed for ever."

"Somehow God makes up to us." Coupled with the refusal of a temple building three promises were made to David by Jehovah through the prophet Nathan. The temple should be built by one of his family. "What matters I or they, mine or another's day?" seems to have been David's thought; the temple should be built, and that was satisfaction enough for David, who was bent, not on his own aggrandizement, but on the honoring of God. Though he should not build a house for the Lord, the Lord would build him a house, and that house should reign for ever. As we read these words, we realize that there is only One whose kingdom is without end, Christ Jesus. How much greater, farther reaching, more wonderful were the blessings granted than the blessings asked for! "God refuses his immediate request only to grant to him far above all that he was able to ask or think," says Dr. Blaikie.

Sentence Sermons.

If naught but purpose in thy power,
Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed.—Young.

There is no happiness in having and getting, but only in giving; half the world is on the wrong scent in the pursuit of happiness.—Henry Drummond.

Honor the Lord with thy substance.—Proverbs.

It is a greater thing to build a fine life than to build a fine temple.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is a parable? 2. In the interpretation of Nathan's parable, who were the two men? 3. Why didn't David understand that in telling his parable Nathan had his, David's, sin in mind? 4. Do you find it easier to see other's faults than your own? 5. With verse 6 compare Ex. 22.1. 6. If one is sorry that he has sinned, is that sufficient to obtain forgiveness? 7. How is repentance shown? 8. If a sin is forgiven, are its consequences canceled?

NATHAN LEADS DAVID TO REPENTANCE

GOLDEN TEXT: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51.17.

LESSON 2 Samuel 11.1 to 12.25 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.8-14

2 SAMUEL 12.1 And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; 3 but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: 6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife..

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. NATHAN'S PARABLE, verses 1-4. Several months have passed since David ordered the murder of Uriah and took to himself the latter's wife: see The Historical Background. Now the prophet Nathan has come, and in a graphic way, by means of a parable, he brings home to David the enormity of his sin.

There were two men in one city: one of them was rich, having exceeding many flocks and herds; the other was poor, having nothing but one little ewe lamb. Nathan adds one detail after another about that lamb so as to arouse the listener's sympathy for the poor man and abhorrence of the rich man's deed. He had bought and nourished it; it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. There came a traveler to the rich man. "The traveler was, as Bishop Patrick explains it from the Jewish writings, the evil imagination, disposition, or desire, which came into David's heart" (Matthew Henry). For this wayfaring man's food the rich man served the poor man's lamb, sparing his own flock and herd.

The rich man represented David, but David knew it not.

As the Philadelphia Record observes, if the people who are blind to their own faults only realized it, what a business the oculists would do!

II. DAVID PASSES JUDGMENT ON THE DEED, verses 5, 6. David supposes Nathan has brought a case to him for judgment. His anger is greatly kindled against the rich man, and this is his decision in the matter: the rich man deserves death; he who had no pity and did so foul a deed shall restore four lambs for the one (see Ex. 22.1).

"The first thing that strikes us is the blindness and infatuation of the man to have missed the application of the parable. It seems an almost impossible state of self-deception which could let him flare out in indignant virtue against the supposed culprit, and never once dream that the case could apply to himself. But it is not such an impossible thing as it looks; nay, it is even one of the commonest facts of morals, and one which we can easily illustrate any day among ourselves. We nod assent to a general statement of right and wrong, even give an unbiased judgment on concrete cases that are mentioned; and yet never make the personal application" (Hugh Black).

III. NATHAN'S APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE, verses 7-10. "Thou art the man," solemnly said Nathan. How his words must have amazed the king! Thou art the rich man of the parable who has done this great wrong; if he deserves to die who has taken his neighbor's lamb, what do you deserve who have taken your neighbor's wife and your neighbor's life? Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things, Rom. 2.1. Then in scathing words Nathan reminded David of what God had done for him, charged him with contempt of God in the sins he had committed, and threatened judgment upon his family for his sins. "In beginning with the parable, Nathan showed his prudence, and great need there is of prudence in giving reproof. But here, in its application, he showed his faithfulness, and dealt as plainly and roundly with King David himself as if he had been a common person" (Matthew Henry). Compare the similar plain dealing of Samuel with King Saul, of the "man of God" with King Jeroboam, of Elijah with King Ahab, of Elisha with King Jehoram, of Isaiah with King Ahaz, of John the Baptist with Herod.

"What was it made Nathan so fearless? Why was it that the king quailed before his subject, whose life was altogether in his hand? We know well why it was. We know that 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all.' We know that a man standing on the right is mightier than kings. It was a pure conscience that animated Nathan with dignity and clothed him with divine royalty; it was an evil conscience that made David cower and tremble before his servant like a beaten hound" (Great Texts of the Bible).

IV. DAVID'S REPENTANCE AND PARDON, verse 13. As Dr. Whyte says, Nathan's sword was within an inch of David's conscience before David knew that Nathan had a sword. One sudden thrust and the king was at Nathan's feet. In sincere repentance David exclaimed, "I have sinned against Jehovah."

Nathan assured David of God's pardon: "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." "Never was there a man who climbed so high and fell so low as David! Never one whose repentance was more absolute and all-inclusive. Never one who fought his way so persistently back toward the heights where good men dwell. Grateful to God for the lives of all the Bible heroes from Moses to Paul, to the end of time the prodigal and the publican will be doubly grateful for the life and career of David, the Old Testament prodigal, who epitomizes for us man's defeat through sin and his recovery also through God's redeeming mercy" (Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis).

"There must be confession, a bold and clarion-like avowal that henceforth I will be a soldier of the Lord. And the spiritual experience will be sure, as sure as the law-governed processes of the material world. There will be remission of sins" (J. H. Jowett).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. About what prophet did we study earlier in the year? What king did he denounce, and why? What have we already heard about the prophet Nathan?

David's Great Fall. During the warfare with the Ammonites David tarried at home and left Joab, his general, to conduct the campaign. After his adultery with Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite, David bade Joab make sure that Uriah was killed in battle, and after Uriah's death he married Bathsheba. A year passed and David gave no sign of remorse. Then Nathan came. The conversation between them took place at David's palace in Jerusalem.

David's Retribution. The author of Rob and His Friends, Dr. John Brown, gives the following account of his father's forceful preaching on David's sin:—

He told the story without note or comment, only personating each actor in the tragedy with extraordinary effect, above all, the manly, simple-hearted soldier. I can recall the shudder of that multitude as of one man when he read: "And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah, and he wrote in the letter, saying, 'Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die.'" And then, after a long and utter silence, his exclaiming, "Is this the man according to God's own heart? Yes, it is; we must believe that both are true." Then came

Nathan, and all that exquisite, that divine fable—ending, like a thunder-clap, with, "Thou art the man!" Then came the retribution, so aptly exact and thorough—the misery of the child's death; the brief tragedy of the brother and sister, more terrible than anything in Æschylus or in Dante; then the rebellion of Absalom, with its hideous dishonor, and his death, and the king covering his face and crying in a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom! my son! my son!"—and David's psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions"; then closing with "Yes; 'When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, do not stray, do not transgress, my beloved brethren, it is first earthly, then sensual, then devilish.'" He shut the book, and sent us all away terrified, shaking and humbled, like himself.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Here is a girl arrested for theft, who is a member of a respectable family, and it is her first offense. "Oh, how could I have been so foolish!" she cries. Here is a boy, guilty of forgery, and he too, calls himself a fool and wonders how he could have done it. How common is such an attitude toward sin, the guilty one regarding his sin only as an act of colossal stupidity which has wrecked his reputation in the eyes of others. He has not the first conception of what sin means, or what its consequences are. Genuine repentance is far from him, and the blessedness of forgiveness never comes to his heart. Far otherwise was it with David when he cried,

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight.
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me."

Every pupil should learn that sin is an offense against God, and that God only can cleanse the heart and cover the sin.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

REPENTANCE: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT DOES

Beginning the Lesson. Today we see David at his worst, guilty of breaking two laws of the Decalogue. No record in the Bible of cool, remorseless treachery surpasses that of David in the way he accomplished the death of the husband of the woman he had determined to add to his harem. But to rightly estimate the man, we must remember that he was an oriental, and therefore sensual, crafty and cruel. Follow with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

His Own Worst Enemy. There is a northern legend of a man who thought he was pursued by a monster. His stacks were fired, his barns unroofed, his cattle destroyed, his lands blasted, his first-born slain. So he lay in wait for the monster where it lived in the chasms near his house, and in the darkness of night he saw it. With a cry he rushed upon it, and gripped it about the waist, and it turned upon him, and held him by the shoulder. Long he wrestled with it, reeling, staggering, falling and rising again; but at length a flood of strength came to him, and he overthrew it, and stood over it, covering it, conquering it, with its back against his thigh, and his hand hard at its throat. Then he drew his knife to kill it; and the moon shot through a cloud, opening an alley of light about it, and he saw its face, and lo, the face of the monster was his own.

The Rev. Hugh Black tells this legend in "Christ's Service of Love" and comments: "We must learn that a man is his worst enemy—nay, that the only enemy we have to fear is ourself; and that we must come to close quarters with self; for it is only

When the fight's begun with himself,
A man's worth something.

David was his own worst enemy. In our lesson we see how he was led to turn the light in upon himself, to give rigorous self-judgment. Rigorous self-judgment is the first requisite of moral life.

Thou Art the Man. The parable which Nathan addressed to David exemplifies the moral function of all great works of fiction. They have their power in their indirect appeal to the conscience. They hold up the mirror to nature, so that we

shudder to see our own vices in the character of another. In the most popular play ever written, Shakespeare has portrayed how Hamlet's uncle blenched and fled when his own unnatural deed was presented in dumb-show before his eyes. No fierce rebuke, no bitter invective, strikes home like the self-conviction of a sinner who is surprised into speaking his own verdict unawares. There is something terrible in those four short words which stab the soul as they whisper, Thou art the man.

The whole purport of Holy Scripture is clenched into those words. It is the very essence and nature of the gospel to translate truth from generalities into definite particulars. The message of the gospel is not simply to all the world, but to every individual creature in the world. The Bible is always thrusting home upon me not only my personal guilt, but my personal responsibility, my personal privilege, my personal duty. All the commandments bind me; all the warnings threaten me; all the promises are true for me. The Bible is written for me.—The Bible in the World.

Can a Man Rise above his Sin? The story of David says so, and that is its greatness. Can an adulterer and a murderer have yet so much good about him that good triumphs in the end? With what honesty do we read this honest narrative of David, and what does it mean for us today? Are we among those who see good in a man who was an adulterer and a murderer ages ago, but who can see nothing good in men today who have committed crime or who have been guilty of deep sin?

It is perhaps a foolish notion, but in some way this story of David always suggests to me Bobbie Burns. Of course, the two men were as unlike as the respective ages in which they lived. David was a man of war, while Burns was a peaceful peasant. In external things there is little resemblance, but at heart how much were they alike! In both was the psychology of the man of truth and uprightness, despite the weaknesses and the sins. Some great critic has referred to the way in which Burns did not seek in any way to escape the results of his sins, but sought with his very life, in ways that marred and hampered him, to atone for his wrongdoing. There is hope for a man who does not pull down the moral law when he himself stumbles.

How fiercely a man like David was tempted! And how little we take that into account in judging our fellow-men. The man of cold or puny nature, himself incapable of deep emotion or of a profound passion, sits in judgment upon some man of masterful nature, who faces, and possibly conquers, more temptation in five minutes than the other man meets in a lifetime.

Perhaps the orthodoxly religious have been too ready to ignore the sins of the saints, just as they are usually too ready to ignore the elements of good in the sinners. It would do the conventionally religious good to read occasionally such stories as Bret Harte's The Luck of Roaring Camp, or The Outcasts of Poker Flat, or such poems as Col. John Hay's Jim Bludso. At any rate, the story of David ought not to be read merely as an ancient document; we ought so to apply it that we shall do justice to that great company who have been of the house of David in both ancient and modern days. Life is a strange blending of good and evil, with God's grace ever seeking to bring the former to triumph, not breaking bruised reeds but bringing forth judgment unto victory.—William E. Gilroy.

What Repentance Is. A man is lost, let us say, in that dark, interminable forest, about which travelers have told us. And he knows it. As he goes on, looking in vain this way and that, finding no path, he realizes his horrible condition. He knows not what to do; his friends are out of call, above him are the black trees, and all about him are the poisonous places where the sun never shines. The man is filled with dismay and despair, his heart is sick within him. Does that save him? He knows that he is out of the way, and he is as sorry for it as a man can be:—does that set him in the right path, and save him?

It is plain that if repentance is a condition of the spirit which really saves a man, really gets him within the blessed boundaries of the kingdom of heaven, it must be something more than conviction of sin, and something more than contrition for sin. To have our eyes open to the fact of sin is not enough; to have our eyes full of tears on account of sin is not enough; we have not yet repented.

The parable of the prodigal son will help us to understand what repentance is. Repentance implies a recognition of sin as something more than a deed to be ashamed of and sorry for; as more than an act which is followed by consequences of misery, by famine, forsaking of friends, company of swine, everlasting company of devils. Repentance means a sense of sin as an offense against a father. "I have sinned against him," against the power of God; and I am being righteously punished for that; but that is not the whole of it—"in thy sight, my father," have I sinned, against

love human and divine. My sin has been a grief and pain "before thee," I have set a separation between thee and me. I have lost the comfort, the strength, the refuge, the benediction, of thy love. "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." When a sinner recognizes that sin is itself more dreadful than everlasting punishment, then he is beginning to repent—to repent of sin.

Especially, repentance means a definite refusal to abide any longer in sin. Sin is no longer endurable. I do earnestly repent, the sinner cries out in his prayer. I am heartily sorry for these, my misdoings. Have mercy upon me, most merciful father, and forgive me!—Condensed from The Path of Life, by George Hodges.

What Repentance Does. Shall we say that a man must be sorry for his sin and leave it before he can be forgiven? Certainly he must; but that act of converted resolution is included, I hold, in the true confession. If David meant just to go on sinning—killing new Uriahs and taking their wives—Nathan surely would never have accepted his confession. The prophet evidently felt that it included the determination of a better life. But shall we say that this better life must be begun, that some good steps in it must be taken to prove its reality, before a man ought to count himself forgiven? That is not so, for the true ground whereon I trust I am forgiven is not the symptoms that I see in myself. That would make very poor business of my faith and peace. It is the simple belief in the promises of God. Let us not be afraid to be as free as Christ. A whole confession must bring a true forgiveness. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. The moment you cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," the reply is ready, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."—Phillips Brooks.

Repentance Is Essential to Forgiveness. Repentance is not the condition of divine love and mercy; it is the condition of divine forgiveness, because an unrepentant heart is bolted against the entrance of forgiveness. It is not that God is unwilling to forgive; but forgiveness is deliverance from sin, and it is impossible to lift sin off from a man who desires to hold on to it. God says to every man, "Let go your sin and I will lift it off"; but if the man will not let his sin go it cannot be lifted off.—Lyman Abbott, in What Christianity Means to Me.

For Discussion. 1. Sin is sin, whether in high places or low.

2. Repentance that avails. "The slightest sorrow for sin is sufficient if it produces amendment, and the greatest is insufficient if it does not." See Chapters VIII and XII of Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks; Chapter IX of Listening to God, by Hugh Black; Chapters VII and VIII of The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is meant by "the great high place"? 2. What do Solomon's words in verse 7 mean? 3. Why are the verbs of verse 12 in the perfect tense? 4. What part in one's dreams have one's waking thoughts? 5. What was the nature of Solomon's wisdom? 6. For what should one ask God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CONFESSING AND FORSAKING SIN

Beginning the Lesson. A timid minister was preaching before Louis XVI on the subject of death. "All men must die," he thundered. But when he noticed that the king did not like to be reminded of this fact, for he frowned and moved uneasily in his chair, the minister was so startled by these signs of royal displeasure that he stammered, "I—I—I mean almost all, your Majesty."

A certain courageous chaplain was talking to King David on the subject of sin—not sin in general, but David's sin. He was called a prophet. What was his name? David had done something which displeased God, and God sent Nathan unto David. "David did right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of his life save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite," we are told in 1 Kings 15.5. What was David's sin? (It is told with sufficient fullness under "David's Fall," in The Historical Background.)

Let us see how Nathan differed in courage from the minister of Louis XVI.

How David Confessed and Forsook Sin. David needed forgiveness. He was a great man and a great king, but he was a sinner and needed God's forgiveness. Let us see the steps by which he gained it.

By conviction. David's sins did not trouble him at first. They did not cause him

to lose appetite nor sleep, and he did not cease to enjoy life. But when Nathan told him that parable about the pet lamb, he saw in a flash how mean and cowardly, treacherous and wicked he had been. And there was no more rest for him till his sin was forgiven. That is always the first step towards forgiveness.

The next step was by contrition. When you do see your sin, you may act in various ways. You may grow angry about it. You may excuse it, say it could not be helped. You may say it is past and done with, and try to forget it. You may get depressed and despairing about it—like Judas. You may feel sorrow for it—like David. David's heart was filled with bitter grief. How great his sorrow was we can tell by his language in the Psalms. And this is the next step to forgiveness. Forgiveness can't be had by just saying lightly, "Well, I'm sorry." The sorrow must be as real as the sin, and it must be sorrow not over being found out or over the prospect of punishment, but for the sin itself.

Then there comes confession. David was always honest and outspoken. "I have sinned," he said. There was no beating about the bush, no attempt to excuse himself. He confessed his sin at once—to his own heart, to the stern yet gentle Nathan, and to God. He prayed for pardon. "Have mercy upon me, O God," he cried.

> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
> And cleanse me from my sin.
> For I know my transgressions;
> And my sin is ever before me.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me,
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

What happened when David confessed? Instantly Nathan answered, "Thy sin is forgiven." He did not put David on his good behavior, saying that if he behaved well for three or six months he would be forgiven. That is not God's way.

All Have Sinned. In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus represents the Pharisee as saying: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." In a classification of Pharisees made by rabbinical writers, there is one called "The Pharisee who said, 'Would that I knew of a sin I had myself committed that I might make reparation by an act of virtue,'" and there is another called "The calculating Pharisee who said, 'My sins are more than counterbalanced by my virtues.'" There have always been people like these Pharisees. Such was a little girl who was heard to pray, "O God, bless Harry and make him as good as I am!" No wonder that Carlyle was led to say that the greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.

"If I was not a bad boy, I think I was a boy with a great absence of goodness," said Gladstone, looking back upon his youthful days. There are many such boys and girls today.

True and Spurious Repentance. In the words of Shakespeare,

> "A true repentance shuns the evil itself
> More than the eternal suffering or the shame."

There is a wide difference between being penitent because one has done wrong and being penitent because one has suffered the consequences of wrongdoing. A man who had stolen a pair of shoes and had been convicted, some time afterwards met the lawyer who had defended him. "Squire, the taking of those shoes was the worst job I ever did," he acknowledged. So far this sounds like penitence. But the man kept on. "Yes, I didn't keep 'em only a week, and then they put me in jail. I gave you the only horse I had to defend me; my crop was lost 'cause I couldn't see to it; and then, Squire, they gave me thirty-nine lashes at last. I tell you, Squire, it was a bad speculation."

A small girl was once shut up in a room by herself and told to stay there till she could say she was sorry for what she had done. After a while the door was slowly opened, and the child stood on the threshold but did not speak. "What do you want to say?" questioned her mother. "Nothing, only just that I'm sorry enough to have the door left open." Was she repentant?

Dr. Grenfell has seen new men made out of old men on the coast of Labrador, the wrecks of humanity changed into genuine Christians. One time he was talking with a dying man on board a tiny schooner, and asked him if the years since the change took place in him had been testified to by his life. In the most natural way in the world the man was able to answer, "I wish you'd ask my skipper, Doctor."

Practical Repentance. Sam Colston was only fourteen, and he could neither read nor write. His father was a ne'er-do-well mountaineer, and the home, such as it was, was mothered by an older sister. All the children were well and strong except Bunny, the youngest, whose crooked back was a constant reproach to Sam. Years before, he had been left in charge of the child, and in boyish thoughtlessness had neglected him. Bunny had fallen from the high porch of the Colston cabin and had suffered an injury from which he had never recovered.

One afternoon Sam picked up a crumpled paper by the roadside in which there were some pictures that attracted his attention. He could make nothing out of the printed matter, but he took the circular to the preacher and listened eagerly to the reading. It was the prospectus of a hospital for spinal cripples, but when Sam spoke of Bunny the minister kindly explained that the institution was hundreds of miles away, and that a great deal of money would be required to take his brother there for treatment.

But Sam set his heart on the project. Railway tickets were out of the question and he determined to make the long journey on foot, drawing Bunny behind him in his little wagon. The scheme was quixotic, but there was no one to dissuade him, and the resolute lad actually carried it out. It was weeks before Sam saw the city of his hopes loom up in the distance, but he kept on doggedly, although the sun was often scorching hot and the stones sorely bruised his bare feet. By a fault of his, Bunny was hunchbacked, and no sacrifice was too great to right the wrong he had done. The surgeon of the hospital called Sam's exploit a splendid example of "practical repentance," and so it is. The boy's momentary neglect of his baby brother was in itself a trivial fault, quite unlike a malicious blow or an angry push, but Sam's unsophisticated mind reckoned squarely with the result, and manfully accepted the responsibility.

For most of us "repentance" is a technical word that has more to do with theology than with everyday life. We repent of our sins when we accept Christ as our personal Savior, but our ordinary thinking associates the act of repentance with great sins and great sinners. We do not realize, somehow, that a conscientious, earnest Christian life is literally paved with repentances for a thousand daily offenses, neglects and shortcomings, and that those repentances become effective only as we work them out in a practical way.

We are sorry for the sharp, cutting word that brings the pained look into the face of one we love. But we must do more than be sorry: we must make our repentance practical. Zacchæus, the publican, was soon cured of extortion, we fancy, after he adopted the rule of restoring fourfold to the person he had defrauded. That was practical repentance.—The Youth's Companion.

The Joy of Repentance. At a Deaf and Dumb Institution some time ago, the master said to all the children, "Write down on your slates what is the happiest thing." One child wrote "Joy"; the next, "Hope"; a third, "Love"; another "Gratitude"; the next wrote down "Repentance." It was a little girl who wrote "Repentance," and there was a tear in her eye. Her teacher said: "My dear, this is not a happy feeling—how can you write down repentance as being the happiest thing?" She wrote, "I think it is—there is nothing so happy in the world as to be humble in God's sight." This is quite true. There is nothing happier than real repentance.—James Vaughn.

Forgiveness. When the Moravian missionaries first went to the Eskimos they did not find any word in their language for forgiveness. So they had to manufacture a word, and this is it—Issumagijaujungnainermik. A formidable-looking word that, but one of beautiful meaning—Not-being-able-to-think-about-it-any-more.

Sentence Sermons. Repentance is less strong and less beautiful than its elder brother, Innocence.—F. W. Farrar.

There is a great difference between one who is ashamed before himself and one who is ashamed only before others.—The Talmud.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do you want most? 2. What is the famous wrong choice of which we hear in the Gospels? (Mt. 19.16-22.) 3. What words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are recalled by verse 13? 4. What is said about Solomon's wisdom in 1 K. 4.29-34? 5. Look up the references in the Subject-Index of your Bible under Wisdom, and select several Golden Texts for this lesson.

SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE

GOLDEN TEXT: Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding. Proverbs 3-13.

LESSON 1 Kings 3.4-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 8.12-19

1 KINGS 3.4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; 12 behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE, verses 4-9. David has died and Solomon has been anointed king: see The Historical Background. Solomon went in state to Gibeon, presumably in the first year of his reign, accompanied by a vast retinue. Gibeon was the great high place, that is, a Canaanitish sacred spot, or place for sacrifice, located upon a hill-top. The Israelites consecrated such "high places" to the worship of Jehovah. The law of Dt. 12.10-21 forbade worship at high places and restricted the worship to a single sanctuary, but worship at high places was practised until the time of Hezekiah, 2 K. 18.4.

Although the ark stood in a temporary tent at Jerusalem, Gibeon is called the chief high place because the tabernacle, the ancient tent of the wanderings, was there. In front of the tabernacle stood the brazen altar for sacrifices (2 Ch. 1.3-5), and there Solomon offered a thousand victims. He wished to display his royal munificence to his great assembly. That night when the smoke of the sacrifice had rolled away and the music and noise had ceased, Solomon slept, and in a dream Jehovah appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give thee."

> "Still, earth grows hard with facts and fears;
> Stark life were but a sorry scheme:
> Lord of the everlasting years,
> Guard thou the dreamer and his dream!" (Nancy Byrd Turner).

In answer Solomon spoke of his father David's uprightness of heart and God's mercies to him, and spoke of his own ascent of the throne as a great kindness shown to his father; compare 1 K. 1.48. Then he spoke humbly of himself: "I am but a little child," he said. Josephus says that Solomon was only fourteen years old on his accession to the throne, but we know from 1 K. 11.42 and 14.21 that he was already married, and it is generally supposed that he was about twenty years old. "I know not how to go out or come in," he added, making use of a proverbial expression which meant that he did not know how to conduct public or military affairs. With customary oriental exaggeration, Solomon thus acknowledged his lack of experience and his realization of the greatness of the task before him. Compare Jer. 1.6-8.

"Admit your ignorance, and few will blame you;
Pretend to knowledge, and the world will shame you."

"And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude," David further said. This was another oriental hyperbole; perhaps, also, a reference to the promise made to Abraham.

Here at the beginning of his reign Solomon thought of his position as a responsibility for others, not as an opportunity for himself. Every one, however humble, has responsibilities and possibilities. "Young people," counsels Dr. Hillis, "accept responsibility; attach yourself by pledges to every good institution, political, social, literary and religious; be grateful to the Angel of Responsibility that urges you with swift steps along the highways that lead to happiness and usefulness and character."

Then Solomon made his famous choice, which was, no doubt, a crystallization of his waking thoughts. We do not dream of what we know nothing of, but of what we are interested in, just as Pharaoh's butler dreamed of Pharaoh's cup, and the baker of his baskets of white bread and baked food. In former times the kings of Persia heard on awakening each morning the voice of a priest calling to them and saying, "Master, arise and consider for what purpose God has placed you on the throne." This is the thought which had engrossed the mind of the youthful Solomon in the early days after he ascended his father's throne. He had meditated on the greatness of his father David, on the size and importance of his realm, on his own inexperience and the responsibilities before him, and on his great need of divine help, if he were to rule wisely as he then longed to do. All this is shown in his answer. "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people," he said, "that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?" The "heart" represents the seat of both thought and feeling: it was for a "receptive mind, one that listens and considers before it decides," that he asked. He would be equal to the responsibility of a ruler and judge. "Happy the land whose ruler deems it his highest function to administer justice! Solomon in his dream doubtless expressed his waking and deliberate wish. God giveth to him that hath. Solomon had wisdom enough to make him wish for more." "His prayer exhibits a consciousness that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, are not always easy to distinguish, and that to discern between them there are needed special gifts of the heart and understanding" (Dummelow).

One night James Murdock overheard President Lincoln praying. Lincoln was on his knees before an open Bible, and these were the words of his pleading: "O thou God that heard Solomon in the night when he prayed for wisdom, hear me. I cannot lead this people, I cannot guide the affairs of this nation, without thy help. I am poor and weak and sinful. O God, who didst hear Solomon when he cried for wisdom, hear me and save this nation."

"What Solomon needed for his high task you and I need—a wisdom greater than our own, to train children, to manage a business or a house, to pursue our calling, to manage the affairs of a Christian church. We ought not to be content to do these things in an indifferent way, in a second best way. There is as much reason for a man to pray that he may buy and sell well, or learn and teach well, as for Solomon to pray that he might rule well. And for all work called sacred or secular, in home or church, there is wisdom greater than our own needed" (Charles Brown).

II. THE ANSWER TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER, verses 10-15. In the words of Aristotle, "The dreams of good men are better than those of ordinary persons." "It seems certain that the will is often only partially suspended, even in dreams. Although Solomon's choice was made in a dream, we must regard it as springing from his will in some degree, and therefore as indicative of his moral character." Therefore we are told that the speech pleased the Lord. Because he had not asked long life nor riches for himself, nor the lives of his enemies, but had asked a gift to be used for his people, God saith unto him in his dream, "Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart." These words are "perfects of certitude in a divine promise: the action determined upon by the will of the speaker is regarded as already accomplished" (Burney). "So that there hath been none like unto thee before thee, neither after thee shall any

arise like unto thee." "At this period the designation 'wise' was used in an exceedingly restricted sense. Subtle, cunning, keen to perceive that which is not at first apparent, is the meaning. The best illustrations are the stories which are told respecting Solomon, as examples of his remarkable wisdom": see 1 K. 3.16-28.

"Solomon's wisdom was that facile wit which is much admired in the Orient. The Hebrew historian adds that Solomon's keen observations and witticisms found expression in a great number of proverbial sayings and songs. He employed many comparisons drawn from nature—fables concerning the trees, beasts, and fishes—to impress and illustrate his brilliant deductions. This kind of wit is peculiarly acceptable to the oriental mind. When it fell from the lips of such a king as Solomon, there is little wonder that many came from afar to listen to him. Long after, when posterity had forgotten his follies, his sage maxims were cherished, and his reputation as the father of wisdom-thought steadily grew. In the succeeding centuries, proverbs of unknown authorship were naturally attributed to him. Since a proverb voices the common experiences of humanity, it is obvious that the name of one who first gave it definite expression, if known at first, is quickly forgotten; consequently, the collection of maxims which bore the general title 'Proverbs of Solomon' rapidly increased in size. This point is well illustrated by the Book of Proverbs. Its general superscription suggests that the entire anthology came from the son of David; but a further investigation demonstrates that, according to the testimony of the book itself, a large part came from other wise men. Chapter 22.17 introduces a small group of maxims which are designated as the 'words of the wise,' and a still shorter collection 'also from the wise' is preserved in 24.23-34. In chapter 30, 'the words of Agur,' and in chapter 31, 'the words of King Lemuel' are found. That some of the three thousand proverbs which the great king is reputed to have spoken are preserved in these anthologies is exceedingly probable" (Charles Foster Kent).

"And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor (compare Mt. 6.33), so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days (compare 1 K. 4.29-34)." In a sense, all the unasked reward was only natural. If Solomon was endowed with wisdom, he would judge his people rightly and also manage his own affairs rightly, and enrichment and honor would naturally follow. There was a condition made to the next promise of length of days: "If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments." Solomon did not fulfil the condition (1 K. 11.1-13): he was probably not over sixty at his death.

And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. In those days men expected to learn God's will through dreams. "In the language of today, we should say that God was using the subconscious mind of Solomon to convey both instructions and assurances concerning the rightful aims of a king" (R. C. Gillie).

"O God, give me thyself; for all things are contained in thee; thou art wisdom; thou art wealth; thou art power; thou art length of days; thou art fullness."

"Give what thou wilt, without thee I am poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Solomon returned to Jerusalem and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the ark. At Gibeon he had sacrificed a thousand victims which were wholly consumed; now at Jerusalem the burnt-offerings were few and the peace-offerings made a great sacrificial feast for his followers.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

That was the great high place, verse 4. To select a lofty place for worship was natural to orientals. The Babylonians, who lived in a flat country, built mounds on which they erected their temples. The Assyrians, Persians and Greeks sacrificed on the hills. We are told in the Iliad that the Trojans offered sacrifices to Zeus on Mount Ida. On the snow-covered summit of Mount Hermon there are ruins of a very ancient temple where Baal was worshiped.

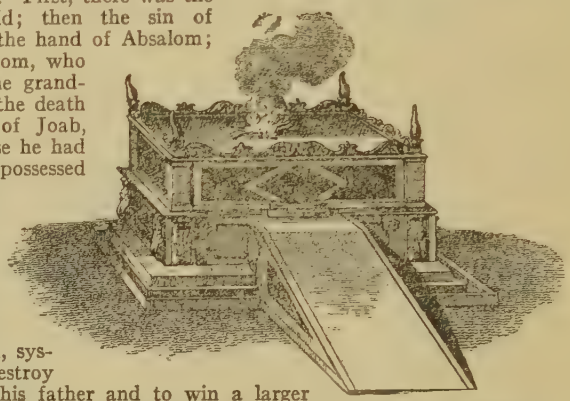
To judge thy people, verse 9. An oriental monarch was the chief judge as well as the king; to hear and decide cases was one of his most important duties.

Behold, it was a dream, verse 15. Orientals have always held that dreams were sent for a purpose, and there have always been those who claimed to be able to interpret them. We see the antiquity of this custom in the history of Pharaoh's butcher and baker, Pharaoh himself, and Nebuchadnezzar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first King of Israel? Under what circumstances was he anointed king? Who was the second king? In round numbers, what is the date of David's reign? When did Saul express humility before a great responsibility? When did David?

The Sword Shall not Depart from thy House. These words of Nathan to David were fulfilled. David's sin was forgiven, but forgiveness could not arrest its consequences. The remaining history of his life is filled with domestic troubles and tragedies. They occupy the greater part of chapters 12-20 of Second Samuel. Blow after blow fell upon David. First, there was the death of Bathsheba's child; then the sin of Amnon and his murder at the hand of Absalom; next the rebellion of Absalom, who was aided by Ahitophel, the grandfather of Bathsheba; then the death of Absalom at the hand of Joab, who dared doubtless because he had David in his power, as he possessed the secret of the manner of Uriah's death; and then when David was near his end, the revolt of Adonijah.



Altar of Burnt-Offerings

Absalom's Rebellion and Death. For four years Absalom, David's son, systematically labored to destroy the people's confidence in his father and to win a larger following for himself, purposing when the time was ripe to seize the throne. His rebellion occurred at the close of the fortieth year of David's reign. His plot was disclosed to David, but, taken by surprise, David saw no hope save in flight. Absalom made a triumphal entry of Jerusalem and was anointed king. Then after mustering a large force he crossed the Jordan to attack David's forces, the East Jordan tribes who had rallied to him. There in the forest of Ephraim, Absalom met his death, and David bitterly mourned for him.

Adonijah's Rebellion and Solomon's Accession. When David was old and feeble, Adonijah, another son, attempted to seize the kingdom by strategy. He gave a great feast at which he was hailed king. Nathan informed Bathsheba of Adonijah's plans and Bathsheba informed David. David took immediate steps for the anointing of Solomon as king at Gihon. When Adonijah came and bowed himself humbly before his younger brother, hailing him as king, Solomon forgave him.

Solomon's Accession to the Throne. "Full of days, riches and honor, David slept with his fathers." He was buried in Jerusalem, and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. The date was about the year 970 B. C.

The Nature of Solomon's Wisdom. The tradition that Solomon wrote the greater part of the Book of Proverbs shows that he was thought of as preeminently the wise man of Israel. Shrewdness, however, would be a better term than wisdom to apply to the quality which he shows in the two instances which are evidently given to illustrate his power, namely his judgment in the case of the two women who each claimed to be the mother of the living child (which immediately follows the story of Solomon's Wise Choice), and the riddle with which the Queen of Sheba tested him (2 K. 10). Skinner speaks of Solomon's wisdom as "that blending of insight, shrewdness and tact which penetrates the disguises of human action, and plays deftly on the true motives which lie beneath."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gibeon was five and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. The tabernacle and the brazen altar for burnt-offerings had been brought there from their previous resting-place at Nob, and remained there till removed by Solomon to the temple. North of Gibeon there is a river-bed called by the Arabs of today Wady Sulleyman (Solomon).

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Volition is the central factor in every one's life. Even the smallest child has the power to choose. The supreme importance is how he chooses. The main purpose of your teaching is to influence your pupils' choices.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. What is a dream? A three-year-old was telling his dream one morning when his father said to him, "But, Jimmy, I don't believe you know what a dream is."

"Yes, I do," the little lad answered. "It's moving pictures while you're asleep."

Have our waking thoughts anything to do with dreams? Are dreams ever useful?

The Naturalness of Solomon's Dream. Whatever be the principles and laws which govern the strange realm of sleep, we know this, that here some of the profoundest impressions are made upon us, that thoughts come to us then that remain; that light breaks on some deep problem. Such things have been known as the solution of a mathematical problem, or the theme of a great poem coming to a man, as in the case of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," during sleep. It is a department of our mysterious human life whose laws and possibilities have yet to be explored, and there ought to be no difficulty in believing the record before us. Everybody will believe that what is stated to have happened here could easily happen in a dream. This devout young man had been worshiping all day: he had lain down at night with his mind full of thoughts of God—his father's God, the God of the people over whom he had been called to rule. What is with us in our waking thoughts is often with us in our dreams.

What is remarkable is that when Solomon awoke and knew it was a dream he proceeded as if it were all actual fact. The dream expressed the deep desire of his heart, and he believed, and acted in accordance with his belief, that God had spoken to him and answered his desire.—Condensed from The Birth of a Nation, by Charles Brown.

The "Conducting" Mood of Mind. In electricity we are familiar with conducting and non-conducting substances. Some welcome the passage of electrical influence, and others obstruct it, and in certain cases fail to convey it at all. Similarly, in the spiritual life, there are qualities and moods which insulate the divine messages and prevent their reaching our intelligence. Pride, pleasure in sin, selfishness, are non-conductants. Self-consciousness, too, though it cannot be called directly sinful, insulates us both from God and man. On the other hand, self-forgetfulness, obedience, humility, and especially trustfulness, are splendid conductors.

Now Solomon on that night at Gibeon was in such a mood that he was accessible to divine influences. He was evidently deeply aware of his responsibility as the supreme court of appeal in all judicial questions among his people. His view of wisdom was a limited one. It was narrowed to this, "to discern between good and bad, to judge this thy so great people." What he desired was prudence and insight and practical discernment in individual cases, rather than the higher wisdom which would make clear to him the whole character of God and the great outlines of the will of God. Still, limited though his ideal was, it was a right ideal, and he was both grateful and lowly-minded. "I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or to come in." To such humble thoughtfulness God could make himself known. Therefore there was granted to Solomon the encouragement of this dream.

Men often complain that no authentic sign of God's interest in them has been granted. Sometimes a permanent intellectual confusion or misapprehension, out of which they can only be delivered by some jolt to the mind, is the explanation why people fail to discern the offered or actual help of God. But more often it is a proud or sullen or careless mood which makes it impossible for them to become aware of the love and wisdom and immediate practical concern for their welfare in God's attitude towards them. The spiritual electricity is there, but they are non-conducting. R. C. Gillie.

We Cannot Choose not to Choose. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well-dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a bon-vivant, and a lady-killer as well as a philosopher; a philanthropist,

statesman, warrior, and African explorer; as well as a tone-poet and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully and pick out the one on which he is to stake his salvation.—Henry James, in Psychology.

What Is the Thing Best Worth Having in Life? (1) Men answer that question in many ways—wealth, honor, long life; and these are far from being unworthy aspirations, for these things are gifts of God—actually conferred by him upon Solomon, according to the sequel of our story. (2) But there is something better still, viz., the power to fill our place and do our duty in whatever sphere we are. Solomon was ruler, and his ambition was to rule well; all of us are workers, and our ambition should be to work well. For this we need tact, discretion, insight, "wisdom," the power to penetrate beneath appearances, to concentrate upon essential things; we need, in short, "an understanding heart." (3) It is worth noting that this, like the other things, is here regarded, not as a human acquisition but as a divine gift; it comes to him who is in tune with the Eternal, and it is not without significance that the man to whom it here comes is represented as waiting upon God in his sanctuary and offering to him a most costly sacrifice. It is in the fear of the Lord, we are often told, that true wisdom lies. (4) It is the simple truth, also, that this deeply-rooted wisdom carries with it the promise of long life, vigor, riches, honor. The man who is thus "wise" in relation to God and to his fellows is more likely to win these things than the fool. The truth of the narrative which associates them with the possession of wisdom is practically expressed in Prov. 3.13.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
Length of days is in his right hand;
In his left hand are riches and honor."

The narrative further suggests the need of prayer and of divine guidance in face of life's responsibilities.—J. E. McFadyen, in The Use of the Old Testament.

For Discussion. 1. The moral obligation to be intelligent. See The Missing of Wisdom, page 21 of Listening to God, by Hugh Black; The Dream of Youth, Hugh Black; Heavenly Wisdom, Chapter V of New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

2. Responsibilities. See Chapter VI of New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To whom was the greater credit for the temple due, Solomon or David, and why? 2. What did the temple do for the Israelites? 3. What is the value of the house of God to a community? 4. What community work should be carried on in the church? 5. What community work is your church doing? 6. What more could it do?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHOOSING THINGS WORTH WHILE

Beginning the Lesson. Let's suppose. Let us suppose that we have the opportunity now to choose what we would like most of all to have. What would it be? We should find it very difficult to decide what we most want. And we should have to spend a long time thinking out what would be the best for us to have.

What is the topic of our lesson? Who was Solomon? He was a young man when he came to his father David's throne, and he had not long been king when in a dream God tested him. He was at Gibeon: why? In his dream that night what did God seem to ask him? The future looked very bright to young King Solomon, and he might have asked for a long life in which to enjoy it, or he might have asked for still greater riches, or for one of a hundred other good things.

In his answer, for what did he thank God? How did he humbly confess his own inexperience and the greatness of the task before him? And then what was his great request? That was a great answer. Most of our troubles, and all of our sins, you know, would be avoided if we always discerned and chose the good.

Another Famous Right Choice. Hercules, you know, was the most famous of all the heroes of Grecian mythology. Xenophon tells us that in his youth two beautiful maidens came to Hercules. One was named Pleasure and the other, Virtue. The first one offered him a life of ease and delight; the other, a life of usefulness and fame. Hercules chose Virtue, and spent the greater part of his life in using his wonderful strength to help weaker people.

Ask for Things Worth While. The old Jewish rabbis used to tell charming stories about an angel whom they called Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer. Musing upon these stories, Mr. Benjamin J. Gibbon seemed to find himself in the outer court of heaven by Sandalphon's side, and this is what he saw and heard:—

I noticed some of his servant-angels were very busy, and Sandalphon explained. "These are the angels of request," he said. "They are bringing requests—petitions to God—from all kinds of people, good and bad, old and young, scattered all over the earth." But I could see that many of these requests did not please him. I asked him why. "Come with me into the storehouse," he answered.

Then I saw that in that outer court there was a kind of store, very large, with this inscription over the door: "The Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." On the entrance floor there was a great and shining collection of "spiritual gifts," as the angel called them. I cannot describe them to you, except by saying that I could see they were very valuable, and that they shone like diamonds and pearls, and other precious things. "They are faith, hope, and love, and patience, and peace, and joy," Sandalphon said, and I could not help noticing that he himself was adorned with such jewels.

Then he took me to the upper floor, which seemed to be filled with pieces of shining armor. "These are gifts for service," he said—"courage, and zeal, and watchfulness, and prayer, and understanding of the Bible, and the power of the spirit, and faithfulness unto death."

"I suppose you must come into the cellar now," he went on, and took me to an underground room, which was dim and even dusty. I saw some coins there that were not very bright, and some wreaths that did not look fresh. "These are money, and fame, and worldly success," he explained. In the corner I noticed a big rubbish heap. "Those are unanswered prayers," he said. "But I saw none in the jewel room, or in the armory," said I. "No," he replied; "there are no unanswered prayers for those things. God delights to bestow his best gifts, and no one ever asks for them in vain. Every prayer for a jewel, or a piece of armor, is always answered. But—would you believe it?" he said, with a sad smile, "we do not get nearly so many prayers for those precious gifts as for these things"—and he kicked a heap of dim gold and another of dull wreaths. "People are always asking to get on, and to become rich, and to be made famous, and that is why their prayers are unanswered." "Do you show these requests to God?" I asked. "Oh, yes," he said, "every prayer goes to God, but this kind generally ends in the rubbish heap. God wants to make people good, and they only ask him to make them prosperous, and so he ignores their prayers. Often, of course, he sends these things, because they are needed in the affairs of the earth. But we think very little of them up here."

The Best Choice. If God says to us, "Ask what I shall give thee," let us make the best choice, and answer: "Give me grace to know thy Son, the Christ, and to grow like him"; for that is the true wisdom which leads to eternal life, and that is the true royalty which brings dominion over self, and that is the true happiness which flows unsought from fellowship with the Divine Life.—Henry van Dyke, in Sermons to Men.

Sentence Sermons. Look out for choices; they run into habit, character, destiny.—M. D. Babcock.

O youth, with spirit pledged, yet free
To make of life the truest, best,
One sure, safe path there is for thee,
The path our Savior trod and blessed.
There walk, and thou shalt surely find
The truest good,—a peaceful mind.—James Buckham.

Every boy and girl ought to be a dreamer and then make the dream come true.—Hugh T. Kerr.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the account of the temple in First Kings 7. 2. How long did it take to build the temple? (1 K. 6.38.) 3. Read Solomon's address to the people at the dedication of the temple, 1 K. 8.12-21. 4. Read the first part of his prayer of dedication, 1 K. 8.22-30. 5. Why are churches and cathedrals made beautiful today? 6. What does your church mean to you?

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

GOLDEN TEXT: I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah. Psalm 122.1

LESSON 1 Kings 8

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 122

1 KINGS 8.1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' *houses* of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. 2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4 And they brought up the ark of Jehovah, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; even these did the priests and the Levites bring up. 5 And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. 6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 8 And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle; but they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. 9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of Jehovah, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah.

62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before Jehovah. 63 And Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto Jehovah, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of Jehovah.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GREAT PROCESSION WITH THE ARK AND THE TABERNACLE, verses 1-5. It was during the Feast of Tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth of the seventh month and lasted seven days (Lev. 23.34), that the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes brought up the ark of the covenant out of the city of David, which is Zion. See The Geographical Background. "Both the House of Commons and the House of Lords were present, as we would put it, for 'the elders' were the chosen representatives of the people, and 'the princes of the fathers' houses' were the hereditary leaders. In addition, there was a vast attendance of the rank and file" (R. C. Gillie). Two processions advanced from different directions. One came from Gibeon and bore the sacred tabernacle with its goat's-hair covering and boards of acacia wood, and all its holy vessels—the brazen altar, the golden candlesticks, the table of shew-bread, and the brazen serpent. On Mount Zion this procession joined the other which bore the ark away from its temporary tent erected for it in Jerusalem by David. As the two processions proceeded to the temple, Solomon and a great congregation with him sacrificed a host of sheep and oxen. "The road (such was the traditional picture preserved by Josephus) was flooded with the streams of blood. The air was darkened and scented with the clouds of incense; the songs and dances were unintermittent. Onward the procession moved up the slope of the hill. It entered court after court of the temple. It reached the Holy Place" (Stanley). By this lavish slaughter Solomon was honoring God in the best way known in those days. It was a primitive method of saying that king and people set no limits to the honor they would show Jehovah.

"There is something repulsive to us in this circumstance, but there is a noble side to such garishness of slaughter. Barbaric it was, but devotional also. Before we blame them, we have to be ready to give as freely in our purified, higher way to the service and worship of God" (R. C. Gillie).

II. THE ARK PLACED IN ITS FINAL RESTING PLACE, verses 6-8. Then the ark which had been preserved through all the wanderings in the wilderness, the troubled days of the judges, and the warfares of Saul and David, was brought into the Most Holy Place. The ark was an oblong chest of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. The oracle of the house, the Holy of Holies of the temple, was a perfect cube

of thirty feet. In the center of the floor must have protruded the mass of rock now beneath the dome of the Mosque of Omar, which occupies the site of the temple. Over the ark were two colossal cherubim, fifteen feet high, whose wings met above the center of the ark and also touched the outer walls, 1 K. 6.23-28. On the base of the ark were four legs with rings attached, through which the staves were put by which the ark was carried. These staves were now left within the oracle, their ends just protruding through the door, "in token that their long wanderings were over." "There they are unto this day," the account adds, indicating that it was written while the temple was still standing and incorporated by the compiler of the Book of Kings who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple: see 2 K. 25.8, 9.

"I am interested in those outstretched wings of the cherubim. I think of the gleaming wings that ornament the tombs of Egypt, the winged globes carved on temple lintels, the massive winged bulls, guardians of temple and palace in Assyria, and all the strange winged creatures that imagination has conceived. And behind all I apprehend a great reality—a message of the guardianship of things that are holy" (Emily Huntley).

III. THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK, verse 10. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone. Heb. 9.4 speaks also of a golden pot holding manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, but the next verse adds, "of which things we cannot now speak severally." Hebrews is here incorrect, or else the pot and rod were once in the ark and were lost during its sojourn among the Philistines. The tables of the law in the ark were a constant reminder that God's promises to be with his people depended on their keeping his laws.

"If a man love me, he will keep my word," said Christ, "and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." The indwelling of the Spirit in our human temples depends upon our obedience to Christ's words.

IV. THE VISIBLE TOKEN OF GOD'S PRESENCE, verses 10, 11. The altar of incense was in the Holy Place, and when the priests came out the cloud filled the temple "so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah." "It produced in the minds of the nation the thought that God had come down into the temple, and was gladly tabernacled therein" (Josephus).

"In some inexpressible way God drew near. And why? Because their faith was strong and their whole hearts were bent on seeking him. The great experiences do not always come in this way. Life has its exalted moments when the sense of God fills ear and eye and overwhelms the being. But they are exceptional. They become a snare if we always look for him thus. We miss God if we imagine his coming is always dazzling and overwhelming. He comes in various ways. The pity which melts the heart at the sight of pain is his appearance. The challenge to face a stern duty is his approach to the soul. The great thing to be sure of is that he will reveal himself; for Christ has taught us that he is here. The greatest prayer is not the prayer that he will come; it is the prayer that we may discern his presence" (James Reid).

V. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, verses 12-63. "The priests who had deposited their sacred burdens came out of the porch and took up their places in the position which afterwards became consecrated to them—between the porch and the altar. Round about them in the open court stood the innumerable spectators. Opposite them, on the east of the altar, stood the band of musicians, clothed in white. As the priests came out, the whole band of musicians burst forth into the joyful strain which forms the burden of the 136th Psalm: 'For he is good, his mercy endureth forever.' Then Solomon first took his part in the dedication. Up to this point, he had been seated on the brazen scaffold, his eyes fixed on the temple. Now he rose from his place, and broke into a song, or psalm (1 K. 8.13). Then he turned and performed the highest sacerdotal act, or solemn benediction. The multitude, prostrate it would seem before, rose to receive it. Once again he turned westward, toward the temple. He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchanged the usual standing posture of prayer for the extraordinary one of

kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in eastern worship at the present day in moments of deep humiliation. The prayer itself is one of unprecedented length; and is remarkable as combining the conception of the Infinity of the Divine Presence with the hope that the divine mercies will be drawn down on the nation by the concentration of the national devotions, and even of the devotion of foreign nations, towards this fixed locality. Then again the sovereign rose, turned eastward to the people, and bestowed a second benediction. The great holocaust followed. In the whole transaction, nothing is more remarkable than the pre-eminence of the king himself over every one else. Zadok never appears, the priests are mentioned only as bearers of the ark. Even the prophet Nathan is mentioned only by heathen historians. The king alone prays, offers, blesses, consecrates" (Condensed from Stanley's History).

For seven days the "dedication of the altar" lasted, and the feast of tabernacles lasted seven other days. Finally the king dismissed the people to their homes, "joyful and glad of heart for the goodness Jehovah had showed unto David and Solomon, and to Israel his people."

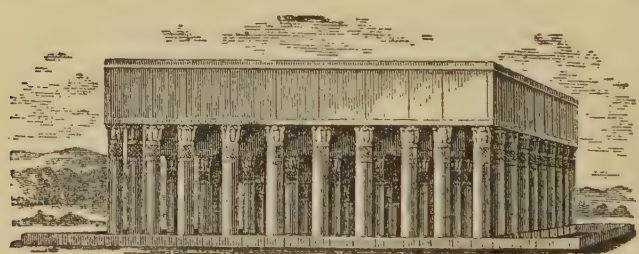
Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? God is seeking dedicated lives.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What happened to the ark in the time of Eli? Who brought the ark to Jerusalem, and what was done with it there? Why had David proposed building the temple? Why was he prevented from doing this? What did he do for the temple?

The Building of the Temple. The temple at Jerusalem was the greatest achievement of Solomon's reign. David is said to have gathered the material for it, and to have planned every detail which Solomon carried out. In First Chronicles we are told David even organized the temple services, arranged every part of the ritual, and distributed the various offices. In chapters two to four of Second Chronicles we are told about Solomon's league with Hiram, King of Tyre, through whom he obtained timber and laborers, and about his levy of Israelite laborers, and there we have a description of the temple and the works of brass—pillars, altars, molten sea, etc.—and a list of the golden vessels.

The Dedication of the Temple. The foundation stone of the temple was laid in May of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the building was completed in November of the eleventh year. In October of the year following, at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, it was solemnly dedicated. As the day when the ark was brought into the city of David had been the greatest day in David's reign, so now the dedication of the temple was the culminating glory of Solomon's.



Solomon's Temple, according to Paine

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On Mount Moriah, the hill in Jerusalem having the Valley of the Kidron on the east and the Tyropæan Valley on the west, an ample space for the temple was made by building up vast substructures (portions of which are still standing today), and filling in the deep inequalities with "hewed stones." Here, on the rock now crowned by the Mosque of Omar, the temple was erected.

The first verse of our lesson speaks of bringing up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. The traditional view has been that Mt. Zion was the hill now so-called, the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, west of

the Tyropœan Valley, the highest hill of the city; in this case the adverb "up" could be used in the sense that the procession had to descend Mt. Zion and then ascend Mt. Moriah. Recent scholarship holds that David built his city on the site of the old fortress of the Jebusites, the southern and lowest spur of the eastern hill. It is thought that Zion was the name for the whole eastern ridge, whose three separate peaks were called from north to south, Moriah, Ophel, and City of David. On Mt. Moriah was the temple; on Ophel, the royal palace and other magnificent buildings within the wall that enclosed the temple area; and on the southern spur, the city of David.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In former days beautiful churches were sometimes built and the Church schools were housed in the cellar. Formerly the sanctuary was made beautiful, but the room where the Church school met was left dingy and unattractive. This condition seldom prevails now, but with the years the needs of the Church school have grown, and these are often not met.

Have you a separate department room? Is it made as bright and attractive as possible? Have you your own class room? Has it comfortable chairs? Are there pictures on the wall? Are maps and blackboards ready for use?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE VALUE OF GOD'S HOUSE TO A COMMUNITY

Beginning the Lesson. There is a beautiful mosque in Constantinople called Sancta Sophia, Church of the Divine Wisdom. It was originally built by the Emperor Justinian as a Christian Church, and when it was consecrated in 548 A. D., Justinian raised his hands to heaven with the cry, "Glory be to God who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work!" And then he looked around and exclaimed, "I have surpassed thee, O Solomon!"

How much credit is due to Solomon for the first temple at Jerusalem? What part of the credit is due to David? Solomon built the temple partly to carry out his father's wishes, partly to beautify his capital, partly to honor God, and partly to consolidate his empire. How did it accomplish the last aim? What place did the temple occupy in the life of the people?

Helping Children to Value the Church. The coöperation of the parents will certainly mean much, and may mean almost everything. To prepare the child for church, making ready his soul as well as dressing his body; possibly, where the calendar is printed, to come early enough to read the hymns and the Scripture Lesson and to get into tune with the spirit of the hour; on the way home to tell him stories of the great hymn-writers and composers, and to discuss the principles treated in the sermon until the full meaning and application are made plain —all this will do much toward making the most ordinary service interesting and helpful, and will develop a love for the church and an appreciation of its value in the life of the child.

Even with the best of services and the most hearty coöperation on Sunday morning, the church can do little without the daily training of the home and school. Only a small minority of the children in our land, few even of those who come from nominally Christian homes, attend its services with any degree of regularity. Multitudes of boys and girls never go to church at all. At most the time allotted is but an hour and a half in the course of the week; and all too often with little inspiration from the preacher and none from the parents this becomes a barren wilderness or an inexplicable hardship to be stoically endured. When, moreover, during the other one hundred sixty-six and one-half hours of the week the child never hears the name of God mentioned, never is brought into touch with the life of the Bible, never is made to feel that the moral and religious instruction of the church applies directly to his work and play and all the fascinating interests of his life, it is little wonder if the church becomes to him a negligible quantity and religion as unreal as the fairy tales which he no longer believes.—Sneath Hodges and Tweedy, in Religious Training in the School and Home.

The Church is the Pathfinder of Civilization. A recent traveler among the Alps tells of a terrible snowstorm. The little village in which he found himself was literally buried. Every road was blocked, and trade was paralyzed. But the

villagers said to themselves, "Wait until the people go to church on Sunday!" And Sunday came. The church bell rang as usual. Little companies of men and women from mountain and valley emerged from their buried homes, and fought their way bravely along the hidden tracks. And by Monday morning the snow was trodden down, and business was resumed. This is surely an allegory. The church is the pathfinder of civilization. Commerce, education, and philanthropy follow only where she goes.—F. W. Boreham, in The Golden Milestone.

A Community that Laid its Foundations Well. One of the great elements of permanency in the Puritan race lay in the fact that they brought their church and their schoolhouse with them, and built the church and the schoolhouse as quickly as they built their private dwellings. Last summer I went through a region that had been devastated by fire, where all the houses had been swept away, and as our train passed through, one fine, large, brick building stood out from the log houses and shingled shanties in which most of the people seemed to be living, and I asked my friend, "What is that?" "The church and schoolhouse," he replied. "That then, was saved from the fire?" "No, that has been rebuilt since." And I said, "This community is laying its foundations broad and deep, and wisely and well."—Lyman Abbott.

Is the Church Useful to Society? A business man, William E. Gould, has a long article in a recent number of The Congregationalist, from which the following is an excerpt. Do you agree with him?

Would our communities miss some of the churches, if they ceased to function? The answer is that they would not. I live in a little city of 20,000 population. There are about twenty to twenty-five churches. I feel very sure that if half or three-quarters of them would quietly close their doors the city would be none the wiser. I doubt if they would be missed. Is that not true in most places? Even our largest churches are open only a few hours on Sunday, and the influence of those hours is not a very vital thing to the community.

In our city we have a Welfare Council which looks after the poor and needy. They are not affiliated with any church, and the business district is solicited for funds for this organization. It functions well. We have a civic nurse in our city, and the organization looking after that work is independent of any church. It solicits funds and cares for the sick.

Our churches do a very little of that kind of work, but what they do is small compared to the civic organization. Why do the churches not do more of this sort of work?

The church must serve the people if it is to live. Why a pastor who puts in his time preparing two lectures a week to be listened to by a more or less indulgent congregation? Why not a secretary, like a Y. M. C. A. secretary, rather than a preacher? Why not a minister who ministers rather than a preacher who preaches? At least have the secretary, and if the congregation is able, then both a preacher and a secretary.

The church should do the welfare work spoken of a moment ago—it should do the civic nurse work. It should run an employment bureau. It should serve the community so faithfully that if it should close the whole town would know it and miss it.

Roosevelt's Points about the Value of the Church. In this actual world, a churchless community where men have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on the rapid downgrade.

Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others.

The church is a mighty force in the community for keeping people toned up to high levels of thinking and acting.

It has kept the affairs of a Moral Governor before the attention of his people.

It has been the force behind the building of homes for orphans, unfortunates, deficient, demented, and aged. It has been the backer and often the starter of philanthropic enterprises.

The church is easy to slam and hard to replace. Kick it if you like; but you will be wiser and happier to back it.

The Work of the Church as a Community Center. The church as a community center will hold its building and equipment for the benefit of the whole community, and set an example of coöperation and tolerance in every worthy en-

deavor. In addition to the regular services for worship and religious teaching of the young, our parlors and gymnasium are used by six community organizations —patriotic, recreational, educational and charitable—without any charge or test except the proper care of the building. The result is that many who were not church-going people come to share its work and fellowship, and ultimately its vision and hope.

The church as a community center will greatly help to unite all classes and ages in a league of fellowship and service.

"If," said George Macdonald, "I can bring one rosy ray of sunlight into the life of any man or woman, I shall feel that I have worked with God." That is surely the work of the church as a community center.—Ronald McCleod, in The Presbyterian Witness.

The Value of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. A reader of the New York Tribune sent this question to Dr. Cadman:—

"Is it carrying out the teaching of Jesus Christ to let the poor and needy remain in distress and use millions in the erection of a cathedral such as St. John the Divine in New York, which, I understand, will require at least fifteen millions to complete?"

Dr. Cadman's answer condensed, was as follows:

"This question was raised in miniature by the purse bearer and others who protested when a weeping devotee broke a box of precious ointment and anointed Christ's feet with it: 'Ought not this costly box to have been sold and the money given to the poor?' Jesus rebuked the critics, saying that 'The poor you have always with you.'

"No amount of direct giving is likely to abolish poverty. It must be attacked from a just and scientific basis. And to postpone art, beauty and worship until after every hungry mouth has been fed would abrogate these things for ever. Yet the growing of roses does not reduce our wheat crop, nor does the building of cathedrals interfere with the work of feeding the hungry. Strange to say, people who build cathedrals also give more money to relieve the needy than do those who refrain from contributing at all to religious enterprises.

"The values of great cathedrals cannot be estimated in dollars. They flourish on a higher plane than money, which is relatively incidental and secondary. Consider what Durham's towers, Lichfield's three spires, Winchester's long-drawn nave, Ely's octagonal, Lincoln's angel choir, Notre Dame's rose window, and San Chapelle's dainty grace have meant to countless souls during nearly a thousand years.

"Shall New York, Washington, or any other of our cities be without such centers of faith and prayer, strength and beauty?

"There are souls who are starved for beauty and grandeur, and persons whose bodies suffer for lack of bread. The last should be fed first. Yet the spiritually needy should not be left without a cathedral as long as it is true that 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

Your Church Expects you to Believe in It. Which is a very different thing from patronizing it, or giving it your cordial good wishes, or even filling up your Duplex envelope every Sunday. It means to believe that it has a mission in nourishing men's lives that nothing else can replace. It expects you to believe in it as the architect believes in the steel frame of his skyscraper, or the engineer believes in the girders of his bridge; or, to take a far more suitable figure, as the farmer believes in rain. He may get along without paint on his barns; he may manage without a self-binder or a steam plow; but he does need commerce with the sky in the form of rain. So the conviction that the soul of man needs the life of God must be equally regnant.

It is true that the groves were God's first temples, and that man can worship his Maker anywhere. But it is also true that the man who will worship everywhere is the man who has learned to worship somewhere.—Halford E. Luccock, in Fares, Please!

For Discussion. 1. The size, beauty, appointments, and worship of Solomon's temple. See Chapter 28, Vol. 2, of Stanley's History of the Jewish Church; The Temple and its Services, by Edersheim; article Temple in Hastings' Bible Dictionary.

2. Except Jehovah build the home, they labor in vain that build it. St. Paul's Cathedral is nothing but a glorified Quarry if Christ be out of it, and my old tent is a cathedral when Christ is in it: Christ makes the temple.—Gipsy Smith.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was Rehoboam right in seeking advice about so evident a matter? 2. How could Rehoboam have prevented the division of the kingdom? 3. What has led to the discrediting of the doctrine of "the divine right of kings"? 4. What is the motto of the Prince of Wales? (I serve.) 5. Were the ten tribes justified in seceding? 6. What may be said for and against docility in citizens? 7. What is meant by "It was a thing brought about by Jehovah"? 8. Is the possession of unlimited power good for any one?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE

Beginning the Lesson. In his book entitled The Cathedral, Hugh Walpole with great skill has described the love of a beautiful English Cathedral. Vast sums of money have been spent in our own country in recent years for magnificent cathedrals and churches. Has the money been well spent? Do we have something of David's feeling that it is not fitting for us to live in houses of cedar unless the house of God is also large and beautiful? David's son, Solomon, achieved what David had willed. Why did Solomon build the temple?

The Interior Beauty of the Temple. Solomon's temple was not remarkable for its size nor for its exterior grandeur, but the lavish employment of gold for the decoration of the interior exceeded anything in other ancient temples, Dr. Cunningham Geikie believes. "The cherubim were of olive-wood, plated with the finest gold. The door into the Holy of Holies was secured by golden chains passing across and fastened to the walls. A thick curtain of blue, purple, and crimson, on a white ground of the finest linen, covered with figures of cherubim, hung outside the doors of the Holy of Holies to screen it from all eyes.

Cherubim

"In the Holy Place stood a table covered with plates of gold, but instead of the single seven-branched candlestick of the tabernacle, ten separate lamps of gold were placed, five on the north and five on the south side, the snuffers, tongs and snuff dishes being also of pure gold.

"The inner walls of the whole building were adorned throughout with cherubim, palms, and carved work of lilies, in stalk and leaf and flower. The walls were also enriched with precious stones."

A Builder of a House of God. One Sunday Ellen, looking round after the service was over, saw a strange girl hurrying out. Obeying a sudden impulse, she ran after her. "Please don't go till I say, 'How do you do!'" she cried. The girl stopped abruptly. "I am sorry," she said, "but I had begun to be afraid that no one here cared to speak to strangers." "You see," Ellen apologized, "we're all so excited over our building. We are raising the money ourselves, and it's hard! But come and let me introduce you to a girl you'll love." The other girl laughed, embarrassed. "You couldn't today, thank you. Just now, I don't feel loving. But maybe I'll come back next Sunday. Only please, please tell your church people to remember this: A church isn't a building!" And then the girl was gone.

She was there the next Sunday. Ellen, who was watching for her, slipped into the seat beside her, and her hand gave the stranger welcome. The girl looked at her in pathetic surprise. "Do you really feel that way?" she asked. "I so want to believe you do!" Ellen heard nothing of the sermon that day; she was thinking over and over the sermon the girl beside her had preached. To think that girls like that were slipping away just because every one was too much absorbed to notice! She could watch for them if she could not do anything else.

Two years later the church was dedicated. Ellen had no money and helped very little,—there were tears in her eyes as she thought how little,—but how she

loved it! She was thinking of it all when the girl of two years before came up to her.

"I want to tell you something, Ellen Haworth," she said. "You won't believe it, but it's true. Next to Doctor Brisbane, you built this church." "I," Ellen stammered. "Yes, you. You have made every one belong. No one ever stood outside a group that you were in. I could count fifty people whose contributions should count to your credit; but that's the least part of it; it's the feeling that's the real thing. And that's what you have given us all."—Youth's Companion.

How One Man Cared for God's House. At a nod from the minister, Mr. Richfield, the elder came forward and cleared his throat. He had to present to the congregation its too-familiar plight—that of a small country church, struggling half-heartedly against the fate that has overtaken so many others. Older members and generous supporters had passed to their reward; substantial families had moved away until now the case looked hopeless.

Mr. Richfield mentioned the deficit in the crisp tone of a man who knows what dollars and cents mean, and how hard they are to get. The Ladies' Aid Society, he added, would pledge fifty dollars; by a very liberal estimate, another fifty might be picked up here and there; but seventy-five dollars still remained unprovided for. That was a large sum for a church at Garnet. "Sanctuary privileges" were not beyond the reach of those who cared to seek them elsewhere, even if the doors of the old church were closed.

The half-dozen men accustomed to "say a word" on such occasions agreed regretfully with the elder. The mood of the assembly was despondent. As the discussion went on, some of the women wiped their eyes. Then upon the silence that ensued a new voice broke. It was that of shabby Jim Wager. He shrank a little from the curious glances that were turned upon him.

"I never could speak in meetin'," he began, in a voice that quavered with embarrassment, "but when it's a question of losing all a man has, he can't keep quiet. You know what I was until the Lord got a hand on me a year ago. I ain't braggin' of what I've been since. It's been a close fight sometimes, and if it hadn't been for the church here, and the prayers and the preaching and the hymns every Sunday, I couldn't have done so well as I have. I don't dare to do without them. Mr. Richfield says that seventy-five dollars will keep things movin' for another year. It'll be a sight better for me to pay that myself than to take the chances of drifting back where I was once.

"I can't earn but a dollar a day, and there ain't always work to be had, but if we come to short rations, Mary and the children would rather put up with that than to have me staggering home twice a week, as I might do. Mr. Richfield, put Jim Wager down for seventy-five dollars, and, granting he lives and has his health, every cent will be paid. It's not half nor a quarter what the Lord has done for me."

Mr. Richfield rose to his feet. "I will assume twenty dollars of the amount," he said, simply. "I feel that we have treated a serious matter too lightly—hidden away from our own eyes under the disguise of routine a sacred trust committed to us by God for the souls of men."

The despondency was gone. A dozen men were standing in their pews. A dozen women sat with uplifted hands. The church at Garnet was saved.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermon.

"Whosoever thou art that enterest
This church,
Remember it is the house of God:
Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful;
And leave it not without a prayer
To God,
For thyself, for those who minister,
And those who worship here."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the "yoke" which Solomon put upon the people? 2. What did Jesus say about his yoke? (Mt. 11.30.) 3. What is the meaning of the proverbial expression in verse 10? 4. What is meant by chastising with scorpions? 5. What do you think of Rehoboam?

LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 18

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

GOLDEN TEXT: Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16.18

LESSON 1 Kings 12.1-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 1.20-26

1 KINGS 12.12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, 14 and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. 17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the men subject to taskwork; and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. 20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

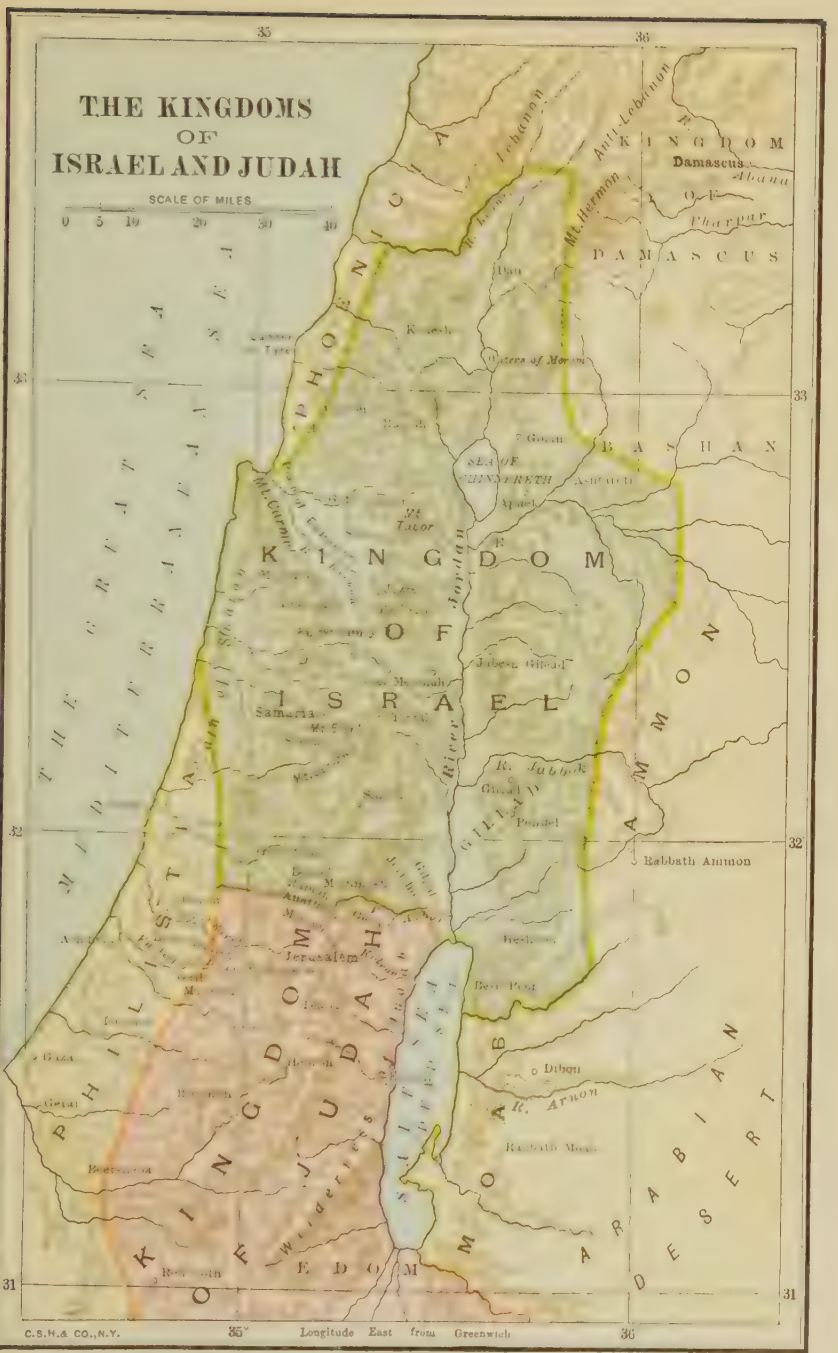
I. THE REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE, verses 1-5. Read The Historical Background. Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, went to Shechem and there the people, through Jeroboam the son of Nebat asked for a reduction of their burdens. "Thy father made our yoke grievous," they said. The "yoke" was an emblem of servitude: compare Jesus's words in Mt. 11.30. The people had been heavily taxed by Solomon, and forced labor had been required. Recall Samuel's prophecy when the people demanded a king, 1 S. 8.10-18, and read 1 K. 4.7, 22-26; 5.11-18, to see how Solomon's extravagant court and his immense buildings must have impoverished the people. "Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee": this was the condition on which the Northern Tribes offered to pledge their loyalty to the new king. The king was not ready to answer the people, and asked them to leave and return in three days' time.

Rehoboam's first mistake was in waiting for the advice of any one. His own heart should have told him that the request of the people was just and right, and instead of asking for three days' delay he should have answered at once, "I will make your yoke lighter." How the people would have made the valley ring with their shout of "Long live the King"! It is always a mistake to consult others about a plain duty.

II. THE KING'S GOOD COUNSELORS, verses 6, 7. "What shall I answer the people?" Jeroboam asked of the men of experience, the elders of the people who had been in Solomon's service. "If you will yield to the people's will for the present," they replied, "and will do their will and speak well to them, then they will become your servants for ever." They seem to counsel fair promises rather than actually fair dealing, yet they certainly advocated conciliatory measures.

"That is the best government which desires to make the people happy, and knows how to make them happy" (Macaulay).

III. THE KING'S EVIL COUNSELORS, verses 8-11. Rehoboam was rash and arrogant; such counsel as the old men gave did not please him. He turned to the men who had grown up with him and asked for their advice. He and his companions were certainly young in wisdom if not in years; the answer of his companions better befits domineering and self-confident twenty-one (as one version gives the king's age) than cooler and saner forty-one (as 1 K. 14.21 of our version states). "Thus shalt thou speak unto them," the young men said: "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins." This was a proverbial expression, and meant, in the



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mouth of Rehoboam, I am as much greater than my father, and my demands will be as much greater than his, as the thigh is bigger than the little finger. "And now whereas my father did lade (burden) you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." "The young men replied in effect: 'Show your metal now. Seize the reins with a firm hand. What the people need is to see that they have a real king over them.'" "Scorpions" is usually interpreted to mean a lash used in scourging which had sharp stones or metal points, and whose sting probably gave it this name. "The same name is said to have been given by the Romans to an instrument of flagellation. It is described by Ephrem Syrus as a long bag of leather, stuffed with sand, and provided with spikes" (Skinner). "Such a scourge might be called a 'scorpion,' just as one that tears, like cat's claws, is called a 'cat'" (Wood). The whole expression is plainly a figure of speech, and the comparison evidently means that the suffering his father caused may be compared to a blow with a small whip, while the suffering he will cause will be as severe as the sting of a scorpion. He intends being a far worse despot than his father.

"The possession of unlimited power will make a despot of almost any man. There is a possible Nero in the gentlest human creature that walks"
(Thomas Bailey Aldrich).

IV. AN ARROGANT SPEECH WHICH LOST A KINGDOM, verses 12-15. When Jeroboam and the people returned on the third day, Rehoboam spoke to them as the young men had counseled. Without stopping to think how he could carry out his threat, he "cracked the whip of authority in the face of Israel." "Rehoboam had grown up in the atmosphere of autocracy. He had known luxury, slaves, and self-indulgence. A man is governed by his tastes as well as by his convictions. If he is trained in self-indulgence, he will often desire the life which gives him the privilege of self-indulgence. Rehoboam came out of a king's court with the desire to oppress, and he disrupted a nation" (Arthur E. Holt).

The writer of this chapter adds: "So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Abijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." See The Historical Background. In Hebrew thought, every unusual occurrence was brought about by the direct agency of God. Rehoboam was not forced into his foolish and wicked decision, yet it was in accordance with the divine will. "Here the historian draws back the curtain. On earth stood the insolent king and the now mutinous people, each driving at their ends, and neither free of sin in their selfishness. A stormy scene of passion, without thought of God, rages below, and above sits the Lord, working his great purpose by men's sin. The greatest crime in the world's history, Calvary, was at the same time the accomplishment of God's most merciful purpose" (Alexander Maclaren).

"In point of fact, Judah, by her separation from Israel, was able to maintain Hebrew religion upon a purer level, and to carry it beyond the catastrophe of exile which befell the Northern Kingdom in 721 B. C. Similarly, the unjust demands of England led to the separation and independence of America; and this, too, when we consider the splendid subsequent development of America and the mighty tasks which yet await her, was surely a thing overruled by the Lord. So even the great catastrophes and upheavals of our own time, we take courage to believe, will yet be made contributory to some wider brotherhood, some larger and friendlier union of the nations, some far-reaching purpose of the Lord" (J. C. McFayden).

V. THE REVOLT OF ISRAEL AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM, verses 16, 17. A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirreth up anger. The ten Northern tribes, or all Israel, answered the king, "What portion have we in David?" What concern, or interest, have we in the house of David? Compare the similar words of Sheba, 2 S. 20.1: these were the old words of open rebellion. "Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." David was the son of Jesse; Rehoboam, the grandson of David. The expression meant, We do not belong to David's household, for we are not of the tribe of Judah. The old jealousy of the Northern tribes toward the tribe of Judah, David's tribe, had smoldered during the reigns of David and Solomon, but now it broke forth anew. "During Solomon's reign Palestine was divided into twelve fiscal districts, each controlled by an overseer who was charged with the duty of providing

during one month of the year for the expenses of the royal household. Apparently the Judahites were exempted from the burden of taxation, doubtless with the object of attaching the tribe more closely to the Davidic dynasty. The other tribes naturally resented a system which pressed so heavily on themselves, and which practically ministered to the strength and importance of Judah and Jerusalem alone" (R. L. Ottley). "To your tents, O Israel." They no longer lived in tents, but they used the old phrase of dismissal which their fathers used when on the march through the wilderness. Let us forswear allegiance to Rehoboam; let us go home, and manage our own affairs, they meant. "Now see to thine own house, David." Rule over your own tribe, O descendant of David, as you will; you cannot rule over us. "So Israel departed unto their tents." A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, Lk. 11.17.

"Just by one insolent and swaggering word King Rehoboam lost for ever the ten tribes of Israel. And all Rehoboam's insane and suicidal history is written in our Bibles for the admonition and instruction of all hot-blooded, ill-natured, and insolent-spoken men among ourselves" (Alexander Whyte).

VI. REHOBOAM'S FUTILE ATTEMPT TO MASTER ISRAEL, verses 17-24. Rehoboam was left king over the people of the cities of Judah only. In an evident attempt to carry out his threat recorded in verse 14, Rehoboam sent Adoram, a taskmaster, to quell the revolt of the Northern tribes, but they stoned him to death. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and there gathered an army, but was warned through Shemiah not to fight against his brethren in the north. Meanwhile the Northern tribes had sent for Jeroboam and made him their king.

"The young king who did not know himself, and did not understand his people, and did not consider the history of the nation, had released forces of whose strength he had no conception. Knowledge of men, of history, and of the meaning of responsibility are fundamental in the true ruler and the truer man" (Lynn H. Hough).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The young men that were grown up with him, verse 10. Dr. Clarke points out that it was customary in various countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noblemen of nearly the same age. This accomplished two purposes: "It excited the prince to emulation, that he might, as far as possible, surpass in their manly exercises, and in all acts of prudence and virtue those whom one day he was to surpass in the elevation and dignity of his state: and also that he might acquire a correct knowledge of the disposition and views of those who were likely to be, under him, the highest officers of the state, and know the better how to trust and employ them. The old counselors Rehoboam did not know, with the young nobility he had been familiar."

The king forsook the counsel of the old men, verse 13. Rehoboam thereby sinned against custom. In the East vastly greater reverence has always been paid to age than in the West. At the present time it is the old men who settle affairs of state in the Arab tribes.

My father made your yoke heavy, verse 14. The yoke worn by oxen was a clumsy, heavy, galling affair, which wore off the hair and often made sores, and therefore it was a fit emblem of oppression and servitude. Forced labor was a part of the yoke that Solomon put upon his people. In a deep rock cutting high above the railway that now leads to Damascus, a Latin inscription praises the Roman Emperor and the Prefect under whose auspices the ancient aqueduct and chariot road were constructed, but beneath, in differently shaped letters which were evidently filled in with cement and concealed from that Prefect's eyes, are two words that speak volumes—*Impensis Abilenetorum,* At the cost of the people of Abilene.

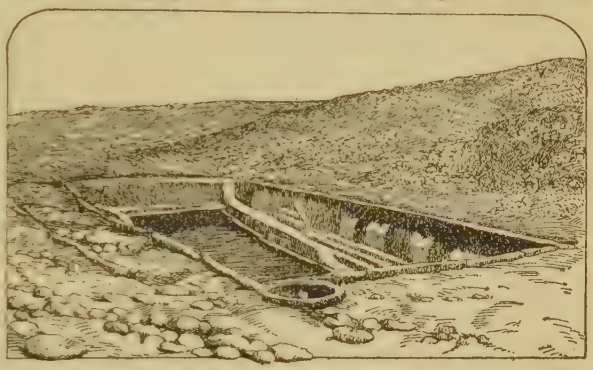
I will chastise you with scorpions, verse 14. Abraham Mitrie Rhebany, writing in the Atlantic Monthly, gives as one of the earliest recollections of his life in Syria, the grabbing of something on the floor which turned out to be a scorpion. The fiery sting pierced under his thumb nail, and he rolled on the floor, a ball of quivering flesh, with a dart of the bitterest fiery pain, which never abated the whole night. "I feel no hesitancy in saying," he adds, "that when Rehoboam said to the people of Israel, 'My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with

scorpions,' he made a telling figure, and the people of that country, which is full of all manner of creeping things, must have understood him very clearly."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first king of Israel? After his death what two kings ruled for seven and a half years, each one part of the kingdom? What led to this division of the kingdom? What tribes belonged to each division? What led the Northern Tribes to choose David as their king? About when did David reign? What sort of king was he? Who followed him on the throne?

Solomon's Downfall. We have seen Solomon begin his reign under the happiest of auspices. He started well, acknowledging his inexperience and asking for wisdom in guiding his people. Next he built the temple and dedicated it with a beautiful prayer. He became famous for his riches and his wisdom. But his last years were a contradiction of his first. It came to pass when he was old, that his wives (seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines) turned away his heart after other gods, 1 K. 11.4. His people hated him because of the heavy burden of taxation he levied upon them to support his expensive royal household, retinue and army. The Queen of Sheba greatly admired Solomon's magnificent buildings, but forced labor was required to build them. During the latter part of his reign rebellion was rife.



One of the Pools of Solomon

Jeroboam's Revolt. Jeroboam was a humble man of the tribe of Ephraim who went to Jerusalem and by his intelligence and enterprise gained an important place in Solomon's building force. He was placed over the levy of his own tribesmen, who were engaged in building the fortifications of Millo, a great tower of the citadel. Angered by their oppression and ambitious for his own advancement, Jeroboam headed a revolt against King Solomon.

Meanwhile, the prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam with a startling message. Taking a new piece of cloth, Ahijah tore it into twelve pieces and handed ten of them to Jeroboam. This symbolic act meant, as he explained, that Israel was to be punished for neglecting God, the kingdom would be divided after Solomon's death, and Jeroboam should rule over ten tribes. When Solomon learned of this prophecy he sought to kill Jeroboam, but the latter fled to Egypt and there remained till Solomon's death.

Solomon's Successor. Saul and David had been chosen by the prophet Samuel and their kingship had been ratified by representatives of the people. Solomon had been made king by his father. Precedent had not yet declared that the throne was hereditary. On the death of Solomon his son Rehoboam was probably crowned at Jerusalem before he went to Shechem to have his sovereignty acknowledged by the tribes who were on the verge of revolt. How that terminated, is the subject of our lesson.

Date of the Division of the Kingdom. A date given in the Assyrian inscriptions, 854 B. C., was in the reign of Ahab. Reckoning back from this, the time of the division of the Israelites into two kingdoms falls somewhere between 938 and 916 B. C. (the sixty-two years' reign of Ahab's predecessors being added either to the beginning or to the end of Ahab's twenty-one years' reign). The date usually accepted is 397 B. C. Dr. G. A. Smith says 933 B. C., assigning Rehoboam's reign over Judah from 933 to 917 B. C.

The Far-reaching Effect of the Division of the Kingdom. It was the beginning of disasters that culminated in the overthrow of both kingdoms. In a little over two centuries the Northern Tribes were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians, and one hundred and thirty-six years later the Kingdom of Judah came to an end at the hands of the Babylonians. During the century that followed the death of Solomon Egypt was weak and Assyria was inactive, and had the tribes of the Israelites remained united they might have become a great Jewish Empire, powerful enough to absorb the other kingdoms along the Mediterranean. Why, then, was this crisis, so far-reaching in its baneful effects, brought about by God? The Israelites were God's chosen people, and their peculiar mission was not to attain political success, but to receive and transmit high spiritual blessing. Political success meant oriental despotism and idolatry. "It was only in the furnace of affliction that those perverse, insignificant Canaanitish tribes were prepared for the reception of their commission. Approaching captivity led their prophets to open wider their spiritual eyes until they beheld, instead of a local God of one little nation, a Lord supreme in the affairs of men and in the universe. Out of the depths of their private and national woe, those divinely enlightened men caught glimpses of the character of the Eternal and of his purpose which enabled them to rise above national annihilation and exile, and to give to their nation and the world hopes and truths and principles which are the eternal foundations of religious faith. Thus, while by the Disruption the Hebrew nation lost its life, in a truer and higher sense it found it, and was prepared in turn to transmit this life and hope to humanity."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After the division, the territory of Israel was nearly three times as large as that of Judah (Israel, 9,400 square miles; Judah, 3,400). Its land was far more fertile than Judah's; to it belonged the rich plain of Jezreel and the wooded hills of Ephraim and Carmel. Its highways were traversed by traders from the adjacent lands, and its people became very prosperous.

Extent of the Two Kingdoms

Jerusalem, which had been the capital of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon, after the division was the capital of Judah. Shechem (modern Nablous) where the great convocation was held when the Northern tribes revolted from Rehoboam, became the capital of the Northern Kingdom. It is twenty-nine miles north of Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. It was the most important place in this kingdom, because on the trade route from Gilead to the sea-coast. From the time that Abraham came to the place called Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh, until Jesus had his famous conversation at the well with the woman of Samaria, not far from Shechem, it held an important place in biblical history.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW TO PREVENT DIVISIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Shortly after Edward was made king of the British Empire he replied thus to a religious deputation:—

"It is my earnest desire that I may follow in my father's footsteps, and by the help of God may be enabled to promote trust and tranquillity among the nations, to sustain a spirit of true religion, and to widen the opportunities and to fortify the welfare of my people."

This was a very different attitude from that of Rehoboam on his accession to the throne of Israel. There came a deputation to him with grievances: what were they? (Follow with Text Explained.)

The Right to Strike. When does the strike cease to be a means of defense and begin to be a means of extortion? We permit the weak to use means in their own defense that we will not permit the strong to use as a means of aggression. No right-thinking person ever did believe or ever will believe that a strike is a good

thing in itself, any more than such a person can think that war is a good thing in itself. There are many who are willing to support either a war or a strike when it is a measure of defense, but not when it is a measure of aggression.

The only people who really need to use the strike as a measure of defense are those who cannot get a living wage by the peaceful method of voluntary agreement with their employers; in other words, by bargaining. Americans are very patient when such workers resort to a strike. But when people who are prospering under the method of voluntary agreement begin to use force as a means to attain still greater prosperity, they are likely to find public sentiment against them. They may devise all sorts of arguments to warrant their action, but as long as we have a public conscience that will justify our existence as a free people the public mind will remain clear upon the real issue.

How prosperous does any group or class have to be before it loses its right to strike? It would be difficult to draw the line exactly, but it is evident that any group or class has passed that line when it is as prosperous as the majority of the citizens of the country. When that majority see that a special class that is more prosperous than they themselves are, is trying to extort still greater prosperity by violence, or even by the mildest kind of intimidation, they cannot be expected to lend much moral support to the attempt.—The Youth's Companion.

The Abuse of Power. Possibly American independence would have come in any case, but its coming was accelerated by the obstinacy of a king very similar to the obstinacy that divided Israel. Back of George III's action also was a false philosophy of life and power. He had been brought up under the constant admonition of "George, be King!" But even kings must stoop to conquer.

What possibilities this lesson gives in its application to youth! How much depends upon sound ideals! And how much more glorious is service than power! It is interesting to note that during recent decades when monarchies and aristocracies have been tumbling, in England they seem not only to have had great stability, but almost in recent years to have acquired a new lease of life. Is not that due to the extent to which monarchy and aristocracy in England have been imbued with the ideal of service?—The Congregationalist.

How the Division of the Kingdom Might Have Been Prevented. Tyranny is the road to revolution. "No good citizen wishes to shirk his fair share of the burdens, taxes, etc., of his community; but these obligations must be imposed, not for the aggrandizement of one man or class, but for the good of the whole. If the welfare of the citizens is not consulted or considered, sooner or later there will be revolution; and government is good only in proportion as it is just to all, oppresses none, and considers the welfare of the whole."

How the division of the kingdom might have been prevented may be told briefly in the words of Ruskin: "There is only one way to have good servants, and that is to be worthy of being well served. All nature and humanity will serve a good master, and will rebel against an ignoble one."

Words of Wisdom for Rehoboam.

He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life:
But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.
By pride cometh only contention,
But with the well-advised is wisdom.
Walk with the wise men, and thou shalt be wise;
But the companion of fools shall smart for it.
A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil;
But the fool beareth himself insolently, and is confident.
In the multitude of people is the king's glory;
But in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.
A wrathful man stirreth up contention;
But he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.
The poor useth entreaties;
But the rich answereth roughly.
To do righteousness and justice
Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice.
The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away,
Because they refuse to do justice.—The Book of Proverbs.

For Discussion. 1. Protests against autocracy.

2. What to do with advice. The worth of an opinion does not depend upon its age. An idea does not have to have gray hair in order to be significant. The world has known overripe opinions as well as overripe fruit. On the other hand, the insight of experience always has something of genuine importance to give to the untried mind. A man cannot take the past as a master. For all that, he will not find in the past a wiser guide.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough.

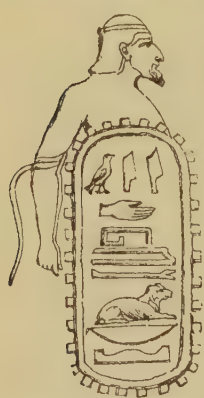
3. No nation gets a revolution which wants something better.—Arthur E. Holt. Beneath political revolutions the plan of God moves on.—F. B. Meyer.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE FOLLY OF PRIDE

Beginning the Lesson. There are some men in the Bible who are like sign-posts on a road to show us the right way to go. They lived beautiful and true lives, and we shall do well if we follow in their footsteps. Such men are Samuel and Daniel, and Josiah the boy king in the Old Testament, and Stephen in the New.

There are other men who are like those motor signs which tell us that a certain turning or a certain hill is to be taken with care, or that we are approaching a hidden side-road. They are the men who were not altogether good and not altogether bad, the men who made mistakes and committed grave errors, but who afterwards sincerely repented and tried to make up for their faults. I think among them we shall count Jacob and David in the Old Testament and the apostle Peter in the New. And they seem to say to us, "Go with caution, and avoid the mistakes we made."



Supposed Representation of Rehoboam

But there is another class who are like the danger signals on thin ice. They are the men who were foolish and obstinate, who rushed headlong on a mad career which led to their own ruin. And they seem to say, "Turn aside altogether from this way, for it is fatal for you to walk in it." Among these last is Rehoboam the son of Solomon.—The Children's Great Texts of the Bible.

How the Kingdom was Divided. Somewhere I have read that there once lived in Japan a good king so anxiously concerned for the welfare of his people that he set a drum at the palace gate, and gave directions that whoever had any wrong to be redressed, or any want, should beat the drum, promising that at once, by day or by night, he would grant the suppliant an audience and relief. But throughout the land there was such prosperity and contentment that none needed to appeal for anything, and the birds built their nests within the drum, and filled it with the music of their song.

Very different was the condition of the people in Israel and the will of the king who followed Solomon on the throne. Who was that king? Why were the people so unhappy? What did they ask Rehoboam to do? (Follow with Text Explained.)

What a braggart this young king was! As some one has said: "How he swelled out with his own importance as he proclaimed the program that he intended to follow, and that the Northern Tribes, he thought, would have to acquiesce in! A small man in a big place will try by blustering and bragging to appear the proper size to fill it, just as a small dog will swell out his neck and raise his hair to appear as large as possible and terrify his opponent. The test of life is not in the form of speech, but of deeds; and he is the largest man who does the most and the best things for humanity."

A Proud King Humbled. King Robert of Sicily once heard the priests at church chanting:

> He has put down the mighty from their seat
> And has exalted them of low degree,

and he muttered scornfully,

> 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
> Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
> For unto priests and people be it known,
> There is no power can push me from my throne!

Lulled by the monotonous chant, the impious king fell asleep. When he awoke it was night, and he was in the church alone. He cried and knocked till the sexton came and flung open the door. Clothed in rags, Robert of Sicily sprang out and rushed to the palace.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!

"Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?" the Angel King inquired. "I am the king, and I come to claim my own from an impostor who usurps my throne," proudly cried Robert. "Nay, not the king, but the king's jester," said the Angel, and Robert was obliged to wear the cap and bells and take his place in the retinue of the king, by courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn. Oft the new king would meet him and ask, "Art thou the king?" and he would fling the haughty answer back, "I am, I am the king."

Three years passed, and a change came over proud Robert. On Easter Sunday

He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord,
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward,

and when once more the Angel King repeated his question, "Art thou the king?" King Robert meekly answered:

Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!

The proud king was humbled. Through the open window they heard the monks chanting:

He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!

The Angel smiled. "I am an Angel, and thou art the king!" he said, and vanished. When the courtiers came they found King Robert kneeling upon the floor near the throne, absorbed in silent prayer.

You recognize in our story the Sicilian's Tale in Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn. It is only a legend, of course. Rehoboam, like Robert of Sicily, thought that no power could push him from his throne, but his pride went before a fall—he lost the larger part of his kingdom.

Lower Your Funnels. One afternoon Mr. Green took his daughter Amy for a trip on the Thames. Starting from Lambeth for Greenwich—a splendid ride if you want to see London—they came to Westminster Bridge. It was very high tide, and it looked almost impossible for the tall funnel of the boat to get under the arch. But the boatman pulled on a bar and made the funnel stoop and stoop till it was almost on its full length, and they passed under the arch:

"There, Amy!" said her father. "What would have happened if they hadn't lowered that funnel?"

Amy looked at the bridge that stood a big, solid lump of iron and brickwork, then she looked at the little funnel and said: "Why, we should have been smashed."

"That is how pride goes before a fall!" said Mr. Green. "People think so much of themselves that they won't stoop, and they get smashed. And it's when they are at high tide—I mean when they are successful—that they feel too proud to do it. It's so, all through life. The funnel that won't lower itself at high tide gets smashed. The bridge stands, but the funnel gets smashed."—Charles Herbert.

Sentence Sermons. The soil for the harvest of pain is brought down from the peaks of pride by the torrents of desire.—George Macdonald.

Something wise within you, boys,
Bids you watchful be,
When Sir Pride would lock your heart,
And throw away the key.—Frank Walcott Hutt.

REVIEW: THE EARLY KINGS OF ISRAEL

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; And his kingdom ruleth over all. Psalm 103.19.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 105.1-8

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Ascertain how many in the class recognize each allusion as you read it. After one of them has explained the reference, ask a few questions about the lesson in which it occurs.

In the fullness of spirit Nathan spoke to David, and so in a hundred voices God through that goodly company of the prophet still speaks to us, and convinces us of our sin and of his presence.—Dean Stanley.

I dare not hope with David's harp to chase the evil spirits from the troubled breast. —Keble.

We think of prayer for others as a privilege, but he regarded it as a duty; not to pray for his people was to him a sin.

"Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil."

"Because you cannot gain
A wondrous Waterloo
In life's great battle, why remain
Unarmed with foes in view?"

Be not afraid. Like David, take your sling,
And do some humble part in conquering.—Julia H. May.

And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.—Milton.

If I am only an instrument of gathering materials and another shall build the house, I trust my joy will be none the less.—William Carey.

His life is the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service, who gave loose reins to his evil temper till his only ambition was to hunt and kill "a partridge on a mountain."

It seems an almost impossible state of self-deception which could let him flare out in indignant virtue against the supposed culprit, and never once dream that the case could apply to himself.—Hugh Black.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What was the condition of the Israelites at the beginning, and what at the close of our Quarter's lessons?

2. What were the duties and characteristics of Israel's early prophets, Samuel and Nathan?

3. What were the successes and the mistakes of the kings of the United Kingdom of Israel?

4. In what sense was Saul's reign a failure?

5. What parts of David's life were "after God's own heart"?

6. Why has David always been regarded as "the great king," and what is it that attracts us to him?

7. Describe the character of Solomon.

8. What causes led to the division of the kingdom?

9. What qualities of leadership did Saul show? David? Solomon?

10. What opportunities for leadership is our class overlooking?

11. What is repentance, and what does it do?

12. What is the value of God's house to a community?

13. What are the obligations of friendship?

14. What are the best things in life?

15. Name several men who are comparable to Samuel in the righteousness of their public life.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Who showed himself a friend to an enemy, and how did he do this?

2. Who followed wrong advice, and what did he lose thereby?
3. Who said the following, and of whom?

"Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women."

4. Browning refers to one of the characters in our Quarter's lessons as "God's own child, with his dew on thy gracious gold hair": who is it?
5. Who said, "Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you," and what was the occasion?
6. Who said, "Thou art the man!" and what did he mean by this?
7. In what words did Solomon ask for wisdom, and under what circumstances?
8. Because of his challenge to the people to convict him of a single injustice, one of the great characters of our lessons has been called "The Hebrew Aristides." Give an account of that lesson and its background.
9. In what words have we been told the difference between the way God judges and man judges, and on what occasion were they used?
10. Who said, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly," and how was he led to make this remark?
11. Repeat Micah 6.8. For what lesson was it our Golden Text?
12. Where in the Bible is the following saying found, and for what lesson was it the Golden Text?

Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

13. Who said, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," and of what lesson was it the Golden Text?
14. For what lesson was this our Golden Text: "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and where in the Bible are the words found?
15. For what lesson was this the Golden Text: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Jehovah"?

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults. 1. The Life Story of a Consistent Man: Samuel.
2. The Life Story of a Hypochondriac: Saul.
3. The Life Story of a Many-sided Man: David.
4. The Life Story of a Wise and Foolish Man: Solomon.
5. The Growth of Envy in the Soul, as Depicted in Saul.
6. The Nobility of Jonathan.
7. David as a Man after God's Own Heart.
8. A Case of "Self-Determination."

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. A Great Day in a Lad's Life.
2. A Great Day in a King's Life.
3. An Instance of Great Jealousy.
4. A Magnanimous Man.
5. The Fascinating Story of David.
6. Nathan's Parable.
7. A Great Friendship.
8. A Foolish Young King.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who is the most important king of Israel between Jeroboam and Ahab? 2. Describe the character of Jezebel; what was her influence? 3. Why did Ahab and the priests of Baal obey Elijah? 4. What was the nature of Baal worship? (See Bible Dictionary.) 5. What words of Jesus admonish us not to "limp between two sides"? 6. What is the difference between an opinion and a conviction? 7. What notable instances of courage of convictions can you recall?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. How is Elijah described in 2 K. 1.8? 2. What is the first thing that we hear about Elijah? (1 K. 17.1.) 3. Why did he make this prophecy? 4. Where did he flee? 5. Then where did he go? 6. Describe the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. 7. Between Elijah and Ahab. 8. Where is Mount Carmel? 9. On what occasion did Joshua offer the people the alternative of serving Jehovah or serving false gods? (Josh. 24.15.)

MONASTERY ON MOUNT CARMEL

FOURTH QUARTER

EARLY KINGS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL
FROM SAMUEL TO ISAIAH

(Second Half of a Six-Months' Course)

LESSON I—OCTOBER 2

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

GOLDEN TEXT: Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Joshua 24.15

LESSON 1 Kings 18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 115.1-3, 9-11

1 KINGS 18.30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of Jehovah came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. 34 And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. 36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. ELIJAH'S MEETING WITH AHAB, verses 1-20. After three years of severe famine in Samaria because of the drought (read The Historical Background), Ahab called Obadiah, his superintendent, and told him to go in search of water for their perishing horses and mules. He was met by Elijah, who ordered him to inform Ahab that rain was coming. Ahab came to meet Elijah. "Thou troubler of Israel!" were the king's angry words of greeting. Boldly Elijah retorted that the king was the real troubler of the nation, for he had forsaken the commandments of the Lord and had followed the gods of Jezebel.

"Thus even in ancient days the age-long dispute continued among contending factions assigning to one another the responsibility for evils among God's

people. In Christ's day it was the charge of the Pharisees that he troubled Israel with teachings that were subversive of the traditions of the elders. With passing generations the expression of bigotry changes; the spirit of anti-Christian intolerance and bigotry, however, is constant. The most effective way to meet error is the restatement of truth. When 'loyalty to truth' finds expression in malicious attacks upon those holding different views, the object is frustrated" (Record of Christian Work).

Then Elijah ordered the king to assemble on Mount Carmel all the priests of Baal and of the Asherah. The king did the prophet's bidding.

II. ELIJAH FLINGS OUT HIS CHALLENGE, verses 21-24. The people assembled on Mount Carmel and Elijah sternly said to them: "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." They had no word to answer.

"The chief note of this tremendous harangue on Carmel is found in one searching and scornful phrase, which is a challenge to us as it was long ago to Israel—'How long halt ye between two opinions?'" (W. J. Dawson).

"I am the only prophet of God left," continued Elijah, "and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. We will have a test. Let two bullocks be brought, and let the priests of Baal prepare one for sacrifice and I will prepare the other; then call on your God and I will call on Jehovah, and the God that answers by fire, let him be God." The people approved.

"The scene on Carmel may be regarded as a poetic representation of the wider test that had been taking place in the lives of the respective adherents of Baal and Jehovah. In the one case moral feebleness and corruption were the outcome of false worship; in the other moral health was the fruitage of the worship of the living God. Let the God who answers by these signs be God! Let the pragmatic test be applied today to rival claimants for our adherence! Let the religion which answers by renewed hearts, by loftier moral purpose, by increased spiritual vigor, by finer forms of usefulness, stand supreme!" (Charles R. Brown).

III. THE VAIN EFFORTS OF THE PRIESTS OF BAAL, verses 25-29. The prieses of Baal did as Elijah said, and from morning till noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us," and leaped about the altar, but there was no answer. At noon Elijah mocked them: "Cry aloud," he said, "perhaps your god is meditating, or has gone on a journey, or is asleep." Frantically they kept up their fruitless scream, and gashed themselves with knives until the time of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice, nor any that regarded.

"A false face, a false character, a false credit, a false religion, will always prove valueless in the day of testing and scrutiny" (David Gregg).

IV. ELIJAH'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEST, verses 30-35. See The Historical Background. Elijah then called the people to him to watch his preparations. He repaired the broken altar, and built it up with twelve stones. There were two kingdoms, but he recalled their original unity by taking twelve stones, the number of all the tribes. "In that supreme hour Elijah will not own a divided kingdom. Israel is still ideally one, and Jehovah is God of all." To hold the water that he was to pour over the altar he made a great trench around it, large enough to hold two measures of seed, about two and a half gallons. Next he arranged the wood, and then ordered that four jars of water be poured on the offering and on the wood. This was done three times, till even the trench was filled with water. This precaution he took to let the people see there was no concealed fire. See Light from Oriental Life.

V. ELIJAH'S PRAYER, verses 36, 37. At the time for the offering of the evening oblation, Elijah called upon Jehovah. "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel," he began, thus reminding the people of God's care of them in the past; "let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." Compare Jer. 14.22. "Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

What a contrast between the wild, monotonously repeated cry of the Baal-worshipers (1 K. 18.26) and the fervent prayer of Elijah! In several respects

Elijah's prayer is a model one: it is calmly confident, conscious of his personal relationship to God as his servant, desirous only of God's glory; and it asks a blessing for others, beseeching God that the people may be led to know him, and turn their hearts to him.

Just as in the well-known statue of Philips Brooks there stands behind the figure of the great preacher a representation of the Christ who inspired him, so in these stories about the great reformer Elijah we may see standing back of him One who nerved and empowered him for his task. It was his intense faith in God that gave Elijah his resolute will, his iron attitude, his masterful way with king and people.

VII. THE RESULT OF THE TEST, verses 38, 39. "God's hands or bound or open are, as Moses or Elijah prays." The fire of Jehovah fell, we are told, and consumed offering and wood and stones and dust and water.

"The test of Elijah remains wonderfully effective. The religion which brings fire from heaven has amply vindicated itself. The religion which can bring fire to cold hearts, the religion which can burn up evil desires, the religion which can blaze in the heart with a mighty and burning inspiration —this religion has permanent claims upon the mind and conscience and heart of man" (Lynn Harold Hough).

Then the people fell on their faces in awe, and cried, "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."

"One man whose life is truly yielded to God, and who is recklessly courageous in the carrying out of his bidding, may turn an entire nation Godward. When he speaks, God will speak through him; and when he pledges God in the terms of his own experience, God will always verify his evangel" (J. Stuart Holden).

VIII. THE END OF THE DROUGHT, verses 40-46. The prophets of Baal were taken down to the Brook Kishon and slain. Elijah made Ahab eat and drink, for rain was coming, the long drought was soon to be ended. He ascended Mount Carmel and prayed, bidding his servant look towards the sea whence the rain would come. At last the servant reported a small cloud, the size of a man's hand. "Go and tell Ahab to make haste to get back to Jezreel, for the rain is coming," he commanded the servant. The heavens grew black with clouds and wind, the longed-for rain came in torrents. In great exultation Elijah girded up his mantle and ran before Ahab's chariot across the plains even to Jezreel.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They took the bullock which was given them, verse 26. They could not have been pleased with this test demanded by Elijah, but the people had agreed to the proposal and they could not refuse compliance as did an African witch doctor. He claimed that his big fetish would protect him from arrows. The missionary took up a bow, fitted an arrow to it, walked off a short distance, and aimed at the African. Alarmed, the latter exclaimed, "White man, what are you going to do?" "Let's try and see whether your fetish will protect you from the arrow," said the missionary. "Oh, no! white man," the African returned, "let's not try!"

He is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, verse 27. When, after long pleadings and many offerings, an idol does not respond to the request of the worshiper, the people have been known to bore a hole in the back of the idol and place therein a live scorpion to wake up the idol.—Elliot I. Osgood, in Breaking Down Chinese Walls.

They called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, and leaped about the altar, and they cried aloud and cut themselves, verses 26, 28. One is reminded of the Mussulman dervishes who work themselves into a frenzy crying, "Allah! Allah!" and of the pilgrims who race around and around the chapel of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem expecting the sacred fire to fall; and of the dervishes who break large masses of stone on their chests, eat glass, cut themselves, throw themselves prostrate for their mounted chiefs to ride over them.

A writer in an English paper comments upon the fact that though the cult of Baal worship was so widespread, extending as far as Gaul and even Britain, only

fragmentary information as to its rites remain. The name Baal-Markod, "Baal of the Dance," preserved at Beyrout, witnesses to such a sacred dance as is implied in the priests "leaping" about the altar on Carmel. It is not certain that the four hundred prophets of Astarte, who appear to have been directly under Jezebel's rule, were present at the great gathering, but the description of the frenzied gashings is an exact parallel to extant accounts of the doings of the "Galli" (priests of the goddess) in ancient Greek writings. They were called "Galli" from the river Gallus, whose waters caused frenzy in those who drank. Clothed in weird garments of variegated colors, with mitered heads and arms bare to the shoulders, they whirled to the clash of cymbals and wild music, smiting each other and lacerating themselves with knives till they dropped exhausted.

Vishnu Asleep

Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, verse 33. Eljiah took great pains to prevent any suspicion that there was fire concealed beneath the altar. An ancient writer, quoted by Calmet, says: "I speak as an eye-witness. In the altars of the idols, there are beneath the altar channels, and underneath a concealed pit; the deceivers enter these, and blow up a fire from beneath upon the altar, by which many are deceived and believe that the fire comes from heaven." In such deception ancient priests seem to have been adepts. At Pompeii a secret staircase has been disclosed from which pipes led to the back of the head of Isis; through these pipes the priests uttered her oracles.

A Phœnician Baal

From a Terra Cotta in the Louvre

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What prophets did we hear about in the last Quarter's lessons, and what was the work of each?

From Jeroboam to Omri. Two weeks ago we saw the kingdom divided, the Southern Tribes of Judah remaining loyal to Rehoboam, and the Northern Tribes seceding. Our lessons this Quarter follow the fortunes of the Northern Tribes, or Israel, as they were henceforth known.

Jeroboam was the first king of Israel. He is known in the history as the king who made Israel to sin, for he erected two calves of gold, one in Bethel and the other in Dan, for the people to worship. He had a troubled reign of twenty-two years. His son Nadab was murdered after two years on the throne, and Baasha, his commander-in-chief, succeeded him. Twenty-four years Baasha reigned; his son Elah reigned two brief years; and then Omri, one of Israel's greatest kings, began his twelve-year reign.

Ahab and the Baal Worship. Ahab, the son of Omri, became king in 875 B. C., and reigned twenty-two years. He reared an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria, and made the Asherah, and it is said of him that he did yet more to provoke Jehovah to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. Ahab wished to make Israel a great commercial nation like Phœnicia, whose ships from Tyre and Sidon traversed the Mediterranean Sea. To strengthen

his alliance with that great power he married Jezebel, daughter of the Phœnician king. Jezebel brought to his court a great company of priests of Ashtaroth, four hundred of whom ate at her own table. All the nobility of Israel who would win the favor of the powerful queen turned to the worship of Ashtaroth with Baal.

Jeroboam had set the downward pace; it had gained momentum under his successors, especially Omri; and now under Ahab and Jezebel it threatened to strike the lowest level, that of their pagan neighbors. It was in one of the darkest periods of the history of the Northern Kingdom that Elijah appeared.

The Prophet Elijah and the Drought. Schools of the prophets had been formed in various places, and the prophets had established altars for the worship of Jehovah. At the head of the prophets was Elijah. Jezebel undertook to annihilate the prophets and thought she had succeeded, but Obadiah, who was over the king's household, feared Jehovah and hid a hundred prophets in caves and fed them with bread and water.

It was time for heroic action, and the prophet Elijah suddenly appeared on the scene. The abruptness with which he is introduced is often commented upon. It seems natural to believe that the words of 17.1 (the first mention of him) are the prophet's ultimatum, and follow an omitted talk with King Ahab; but all Elijah's appearances are unannounced and sudden. "The great man was always as lightning out of heaven," Carlyle comments; "the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they, too, would flame."

"As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word," was Elijah's pronouncement, and then he fled to the brook Cherith, where during the drought he was fed by ravens, and next to Zarephath near Sidon, where a widow's cakes of meat and cruse of oil failed not for their subsistence.

The Meaning of the Stories about Elijah. In The Old Testament and Modern Life, Stafford A. Brooks states the meaning succinctly: "This is clear—that we have in this story of Elijah the record of the actual struggle which went on in Israel for at least fifty years between monothism and idolatry; between puritanism and immorality; between the individual consciences and a despotism; between nationalism and foreign influences. Politically, socially, morally, and religiously, Elijah represented and concentrated this struggle, and we see it here, in the Book of Kings, drawn for us in the form in which men a generation or two later than the events looked back upon it."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mount Carmel is one of the distinctive features of Palestine. It is a ridge twelve or thirteen miles long ending in a bold promontory projecting into the Mediterranean Sea. Its eastern bluff is seventeen hundred and fifty feet above the sea. A series of rocky terraces leads down to the Plain of Esdraelon. The scene of the contest is localized by tradition at the southeastern extremity of the ridge, and is called "The Place of Burning." At the foot of the cliff the Kishon runs. Tradition also declares a cave toward the sea, beneath a great Carmelite Monastery, to have been the home of the stern prophet of reform.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"The secret of true art," said the great French artist, Millet, "is to paint what one does not see." "What does that tell you?" he once asked an artist friend as he showed him a small canvas. It was a simple scene picturing a country lane with a few dandelions and four o'clocks growing in the grass. "I don't know what I see," answered the friend after a long study of the picture, "but I hear the nightingale!"

Such true art is the story of Elijah as portrayed in the First Book of Kings. We don't know what we see, but we hear the thunder and the very words of God. Let us so teach it.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE COURAGE OF CONVICTION

Beginning the Lesson. What do you know about Elijah? If you were the editor of an international "Who's Who" in the middle of the ninth century B. C.,

the greatest name in all your record would be Elijah, but you could not tell where nor when he was born, who his parents were, how he was brought up, where he lived, what he did during most of his life. Where he came from no one knew; he always appeared suddenly, and as suddenly disappeared; and yet he is one of the Titans of the Old Testament, and indeed of all literature. He so dominated the Hebrew imagination that when Jesus wrought his mighty works the common people explained him by saying that he was Elijah. To this day he dominates the imagination of the orthodox Jew, who on the Passover evening places a cup on the table for "the Prophet of Redemption." Majestic, stern, relentless, full of indignation at the people's apostacy, burning with zeal for Jehovah, this heroic prophet, this man of action, accomplished a great work. What was it?

Elijah might well have believed that to be found in Israel while the drought which he had declared to be a punishment sent from God still lasted, would be to forfeit his life, yet he came, summoned the king, and denounced him as the troubler and destroyer of his people, and the king found himself but a passive instrument in the prophet's strong hands.

The whole nation had cast off its allegiance to Jehovah. Elijah believed he stood alone, the last follower of the true God. And he was the last one who could be counted upon to take a stand in God's behalf. He had the courage of his convictions; he was actuated by such intense zeal for the cause of God that he was indomitable. Elijah represents an earlier and more primitive stage of moral and religious thinking than the other prophets about whom we shall study this Quarter—Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah—yet he was the man for his times. He was ruthless, but ruthlessness was needed to stem the tide of idolatry.

Do the Impossible. We have a God who delights in the impossible, who challenges the meanest of his followers to attempt that which no man has ever attempted, and to succeed. We have a God who, typified in the Old Testament by Elijah, his servant, pours out the water on the burnt sacrifice, and does it a second time and a third time in order to make it impossible for himself to answer by fire—and then does it! The problem of the Moslem World has been designated as the impossible, possible problem. We stand before this task and remember the words: "The things that are impossible with man are possible with God."—Samuel Zwemer.

A Notable Instance of Courage of Convictions. Luther had the courage of his convictions when with soul unafraid he uttered those memorable words at the Diet of Worms: "Here I take my stand. I cannot do otherwise. So help me, God."

"That which he knew he uttered,
Conviction made him strong;
And with undaunted courage
He faced and fought the wrong.
No power on earth could silence him
Whom love and faith made brave;
And though four hundred years have gone
Men strew with flowers his grave."

Have we the courage of our convictions? Have we any real convictions? It was said of a great Englishman that "not only had he the courage of his convictions but he had the courage to have convictions." Do we so lack interest in some great cause that we fail to have any real convictions about it one way or the other? A conviction is more than an opinion. As some one has said, opinions are as common as the sands of the seashore; convictions are as rare as diamonds. The world needs today, as it has always needed, men who have convictions and the courage to stand by them.

No Compromise. The temptation of the prophet is compromise. Did not Wilberforce feel that temptation when a friend laid his hand upon his arm, and pointed him to a cross, saying, "That is what happens to men who endeavor to reform society as you are now doing"? Did not Luther feel it through all that long and splendid day when all the powers that were, urged him at first in friendship and at last in menace to withdraw his theses, until in the end he cried, "Here I take my stand. I can do no other thing"? Does not the statesman feel it when he is told he will wreck his party by persisting in impracticable ideals of righteousness; and the writer when the publishers and critics tell him that he must modify his views if he would turn hostility and indifference into fame and admiration? Do not we, who live ordinary and unnoticeable lives, feel it when we are warned that

certain customs of trade and society must be obeyed if we would attain a moderate prosperity, but that instant and continuous adversity awaits us if they be disregarded? And there is always a chance that we may be wrong. There are always four hundred false prophets to one true prophet. There is always a kind of authority in numbers. But it is not thus that the great makers of history have argued. It was not thus, in our own times, that John Brown reasoned when he attempted valiantly and vainly to free the slaves of Virginia, whom neither the law nor the gospel would liberate. And although for us there may be no supreme hour when liberty and truth speak through our lips for the salvation of nations, yet to the humblest man there do come occasions when Truth offers us the Crown of Thorns and Lies the Crown of Gold; and in such hours we can only save our souls by learning to say with Micaiah, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."—W. J. Dawson, in a Sermon.

The Source of a Reformer's Courage. When Mr. W. T. Stead, then editing a powerful and prosperous London paper, first began to publish in it revelations of abnormal wickedness in London, one of his friends said to him, "Stead, can you afford to do this?" "I have a wealthy partner," he answered. "Who is that?" said his friend. "The Lord God Almighty," was his sublime reply. He had a great Ally, and so have we, when we contend for righteousness. Just as there stood behind the humblest soldier of Rome the massed might of the Empire which he represented, so behind the humblest soldier of righteousness there stand the inexhaustible reserves of God's wisdom and strength. This is the first conviction necessary to man who fights for righteousness as Paul and Elijah did.

The second is to believe that we have an invincible cause. I do not mean that we have a cause which can never be defeated. Were victory so completely guaranteed as that, there would be no sense in fighting for it. But what I mean is that we have a cause which in the long run must prevail, although it may be again and again arrested. It is impossible that an intelligent people will worship Baal forever; their reason must reveal to them that Jehovah is superior to Baal. It is impossible that a great race which has won world-empire will forever be content to worship Cæsar as God; their deeper spiritual instincts must demand not Cæsar but Christ. Thus the two great forces which make the Christian soldier are belief in his Captain and his cause; he knows whom he has believed and is certain that in the long run all enemies will be placed beneath the feet of him whom he serves.—W. J. Dawson, in a Sermon.

For Discussion. 1. Elijah. See Chapter IX of Mountain Scenes from the Bible, by Wm. Robert Polhamus; Volume on Elijah in Men of the Bible Series; Elijah the Prophet, by Wm. M. Taylor.

2. The use of sarcasm: to what extent may we follow the example of Elijah? "Sarcasm is a kind of intellectual tabasco sauce to be used sparingly by wise reformers."

3. The evils which today call for Elijahs.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What must Elijah have expected after his victory on Carmel? 2. What happened instead? 3. How do you reconcile Elijah's fear of Jezebel with his courage on Carmel? 4. What perfectly natural causes contributed to Elijah's despondency? 5. Was there anything unreal about Elijah's meeting with God on Horeb? 6. How did God speak to Elijah? 7. How does God speak to us today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

STANDING FOR GOD AGAINST THE CROWD

Beginning the Lesson. For a long time now, some three years, no life-giving rain has fallen in the Kingdom of Israel. Why? (By questions rapidly recall the situation, the beginning and the growth of idolatry, the crisis, the appearance of Elijah, his prophecy, flight to Cherith, stay in Zarephath, and the reason for his reappearing in his own country. Ask the pupil to whom the question was especially assigned to describe the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. Call upon another pupil to tell about the meeting between Elijah and Ahab. Have Mount Carmel located.)

A Man versus a Multitude. Three things make the heroism of Elijah at Carmel one of the most notable events in the Old Testament. First, he stood absolutely

alone. He had no open sympathizers at his side. He had no assurance of any secret sympathy on his behalf. Second, he issued the challenge. It is one thing when solitary to endure opposition, it is quite another to invite attack. To come out into the open, when one knows oneself entirely unsupported by one's fellowmen, is much harder than to await their onslaught. Third, he acted with conspicuous fairness. He gave his opponents every opportunity. Theirs was the first trial, his the prolonged waiting. They had every advantage, save the succor of God. The prophet towers above the centuries as we look back and see him standing there, facing the unwilling and truculent prophets of Baal, the hostile and suspicious king, the wavering and unreliable multitude. It was God and one man against the world. —R. C. Gillie.

Continue with the story, making use of Explanations and Comments.

When a Queen Stood for God against a Crowd. Formerly the natives of the Hawaiian Islands had a dread goddess whom they called Pele. She dwelt in the fiery part of the Volcano Kilauea, and her power was great and terrible. The Princess Kapiolani arranged a test, that she might prove to her people that Pele was powerless. She made a pilgrimage of a hundred miles, most of the way on foot, to the great crater. There she was met by a missionary who had walked barefoot (for he had no shoes) from Hilo, twenty-five miles away. The two then descended from the rim to the "black rock." There they were within sight and hearing of some eighty watching natives, and the Princess said to them: "The Lord is my God. He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele. If I perish from the anger of Pele, you may fear the power of Pele. If I do not perish, all the gods of Hawaii are vain." The terrified people expected to see the fire leap upon her for thus defying their goddess, but she stood there calmly, sang a hymn of praise, and then returned to them unharmed. Her test did much to convince the Hawaiians that their gods were vain, and that "Jehovah, he is God," even as Elijah's test convinced the Israelites.

The Courage of a Great Missionary. The natives of the New Hebrides were at first very hostile to John G. Paton. They set fire to the church and then to the reed fence around his house. Paton and his friends knew that the savages intended to kill them should they attempt to make their escape after their building was afire. The intrepid missionary went out and began putting out the fire. What followed he tells:—

"The savages yelled in rage and urged each other to strike the first blow, but the Invisible One restrained them. I stood invulnerable beneath his invisible shield, and succeeded in rolling back the tide of flame from our dwelling house. At this dread moment occurred an incident which my readers may explain as they like, but which I trace directly to the interposition of my God. A rushing and roaring sound came from the south, like the noise of a mighty engine or of muttering thunder. Every head was instinctively turned in that direction, and they knew from previous hard experience that it was one of their awful tornadoes of wind and rain. The mighty roaring of the wind, the black cloud pouring down unceasing torrents, and the whole surroundings awed these savages into silence. Some began to withdraw from the scene; all lowered their weapons of war, and several, terror-stricken, exclaimed: 'That is Jehovah's rain. Truly, their Jehovah God is fighting for them and helping them. Let us away!' A panic seized upon them. They threw away their remaining torches. In a few minutes they had all disappeared in the bush, and I was left alone, praising God for his marvelous works."

Sentence Sermons. Let no one falter who thinks he is right.—Lincoln.

The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail.—Lincoln.

One man with God at his back, who fears nothing, can work marvels.—Alexander Maclaren.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What happened at the close of the great contest on Mount Carmel? (1 K. 18.41-46). 2. What effect did Ahab's report have on Jezebel? 3. Why did Elijah flee to Horeb? 4. What earlier deed of Jezebel's gave Elijah cause to fear her wrath? (1 K. 18.4). 5. What took place under the juniper tree? 6. What does it mean to be jealous for another? 7. What do we call the still small voice that speaks to us?

LESSON II—OCTOBER 9

ELIJAH HEARS GOD'S VOICE

**GOLDEN TEXT: Wait for Jehovah:
Be strong and let thy heart take courage. Psalm 27.14**

LESSON 1 Kings 19 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 57.1-5

1 KINGS 19.9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: 12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet will I leave *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE DESPONDENT PROPHET, verses 9, 10. Elijah's reaction after his great exultation was most natural, as every one must realize from his own experience. The ebb follows the high tide; depression succeeds exaltation. The fire died down within Elijah's soul, the situation in Israel seeming to him hopeless. He sought a cave on Mount Horeb, and there was made aware of God's "listening ear and sympathizing heart." There is nothing unreal in his meeting there with God, for "the prophet's own soul, inspired by the God within him, shaped it in his imagination." While meditating there he was brought to face the question of his motive in withdrawing to the wilderness: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Should he answer that he had run away from Jezebel? That he was utterly discouraged, and had perhaps purposed giving up his work on the mount which he thought of as especially "the mount of God"?

"The first step in waiting on God is always self-examination, the uncovering of our inmost heart, the laying ourselves naked before God's eyes. His Spirit cannot breathe itself into us while we are preoccupied with motives of our own. The soul must first be swept clear by confession. What doest thou here, Elijah? Examine yourself; review your life; face the facts, facts without and facts within; know yourself; and then when all subterfuge, all subtle hypocrisy, all self-delusion is done away, the ear may at length be open to hear the voice, not of your own will, but of God's."

Elijah could honestly answer that he had been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts. Our words *jealous* and *zeal* are of kindred origin, and may be traced back to the Greek word which means *boiling.* To be jealous for some one is to be burning with zeal for that one's interests. Elijah's whole life was marked by his zeal for God. The necessity for his zeal lay in the fact which is next related, that the children of Israel had forsaken God's covenant, had thrown down his altars and slain his prophets with the sword. He thought that all hope of reformation of the people was lost, for the prophets were the only ones who could bring about a change for the better. "And I, even I only, am left," he wailed: "among the faithless, faithful only he," as Milton puts it. Moreover, his life, the life of the only living prophet, was in danger.

"There is a rather strikingly close parallel to this in Ruskin's words in Fors Clavigera. He also had been carrying on a prophetic crusade, and now, under

sixty years, seemed old, broken and alone. "What am I," he writes, "to claim leadership, infirm and old? But I have found no other man in England, none in Europe, ready to receive it. Such as I am, to my own amazement I stand—so far as I can discern—alone in conviction, in hope, and in resolution, in the wilderness of this modern world." That is the egoism of devotedness—the last infirmity of prophetic minds.

"Elijah had told the truth about himself. The man's intent was altogether good. He had tried to be God's champion. Well and honestly done! But had he not a little exaggerated his importance? Had he not felt that his failure was God's failure? Had he not almost usurped God's place, and felt that the battle of God was lost because, forsooth, he himself had had a rebuff? Was God really quite so helpless without his eager championship?" (Lewis Johnson).

Much of the discouragement in the lives of workers lies in their thinking like Elijah that all depends upon them alone.

II. HOW GOD REVEALS HIMSELF, verses 11-14. "Go forth, and stand before the mount before Jehovah," was the next thought that came to him from God. As he obeyed, a storm broke over the mountains. And the Lord passed by in the symbol of his power—a terrific wind whose whirling blast splintered the rocks and hurled them down into the valley beneath his feet, but no voice of Jehovah was heard in that wild hurricane, no message came to Elijah. An earthquake followed the hurricane, and a fire followed the earthquake, but neither in the earthquake nor in the flashing lightning was God's voice heard.

Wind and earthquake and fire told of God's awful might, but brought no clear message to the expectant prophet. And after the fire a still, small voice. Hebrew, a sound of gentle stillness. Revised Version. Compare Job 4.16: "There was silence, and I heard a voice." "More marvelous than all the tempestuous havoc of the storm was that infinite stillness, that utter motionless rest, that dignity of silence. In this quietness Elijah felt God drawing nigh, companionable, communicative, a whispering presence by his side, a still, small voice."

It is not in extraordinary ways that God's voice is heard. It is when the tumult and the passion die and are succeeded by calmer moments that God draws near and speaks to us through reason and conscience.

Thus was Elijah taught that when great contests failed of result, gentle and long-continued methods would avail. Elijah's harsh methods, his deeds of violence, were not God's methods: God reveals himself in deeds of tolerance and kindness.

Reverently Elijah wrapped his mantle about his face and stood at the mouth of the cave. So Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God, Ex. 3.6. Elijah left his dismal cave, his self-delusion, his self-conceit and apprehension, and stood before God—surveyed the whole situation as told in the repeated words of verses nine and ten. Again the same question came to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" and again he made the same answer, reciting his zeal for God, the wickedness of the people, the loneliness of his position; but this time, as one writer suggests, perhaps there was no querulous ring in his voice, but rather a note of hope as of one ready for further summons.

III. THE CURE FOR DESPONDENCY, verses 15-18. And Jehovah said unto him, Go. You have fled from your work. Return to it.

Go. This is the word for all discouraged hearts. Get to work, do something for others, fill your mind and heart so full of work that there is no room for your own discouragements.

"Return on thy way back to the Kingdom of Israel across the wilderness of Damascus and there anoint Hazael to be king over Syria." Hazael was the general of Benhadad, who was then king of Syria: see 2 K. 8.7-15. "And anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel": see 2 K. 9.1-6. Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat, the grandson of Nimshi, and an officer at this time in Ahab's army. Through Hazael and Jehu, God was to execute judgment on the house of Ahab: Jehu was a scourge of the Lord to the people, and Hazael also generously afflicted Israel: read 2 Kings, chapters 9 and 10. Elijah did not himself anoint Jehu, nor are we told that he anointed Hazael; he caused them to be anointed.

"And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." Elijah had thought himself necessary to the work of reformation; he learned that "God buries the workman, but the work goes on," and that it

would take time to abolish idolatry, he could not expect it to be accomplished in his lifetime.

"Leaders grow old before they are aware of it. At last they recognize with astonishment that their day is over; the wave that carried them aloft has spent itself; they are no longer the indispensable helmsmen. It is easy for an injured vanity to warp a man's view of current movements and future prospects, for doubt and distrust of the younger world and its new-fangled methods to turn the old-time pioneer into the timid and carping conservative. These are the peculiar temptations of the elderly; and only a great faith in God can overcome them, and leave old age full of the grace of humility and the courage of hope. But these patient and gentle virtues are what God demands from the old folk; for only by them can men link themselves on to the younger generations whom they are bidden to bless and ordain for that divine strife which is at once ever old and ever new. It is a great tax on our faith to lay aside our well-proved weapons and, with a graceful disregard of self, to give an encouraging benediction to the younger men who come forward with unaccustomed arms. Yet this is forever the last commission God lays upon us. We are not to whine despairingly because our onset has not finished the fight; not to gaze abroad with distrustful contempt as if none but ourselves were left to fulfil God's work; not to be sullen and suicidal because we cannot enjoy the solitary honor of completed victory. We have to obliterate self and anoint the young generation by wise sympathy and hopeful encouragement. And in so doing we shall ourselves be blessed with the sense of membership in an imperishable brotherhood" (Lewis Johnson).

"And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay." "This clause is enigmatical. Elisha can hardly be said to have slain any. He lived, on the whole, in friendship with the kings both of Israel and of Aram, and in peace and honor in the cities. But the general idea seems to be that he would carry on the mission of Elijah alike for the guidance and the heaven-directed punishments of the kings and nations, and that the famines, raids, and humiliations which rendered his nation miserable under the sons of Ahab should be elements of his sacred mission" (F. W. Farrar).

"Think not that you alone have remained true to me, for there are seven thousand in Israel which have not worshiped Baal," is the last humbling but comforting message that came to Elijah on the mount of God. There usually are more good people in the world than one thinks.

"All the time that Elijah was repining and meditating death under the juniper tree, God was preparing the young ploughman of Abel-meholah to wear Elijah's mantle, and to carry forward Elijah's work. And when we are prognosticating the headlessness and the collapse of the church when this man and that man shall have fallen asleep, all the time God has his servants, quite well known to him, and quite ready to take up this man's and that man's great office when they shall demit it. There are certainly at school, at college, in the shop, in the office, on the hills, in the mine, young men who, fifty-and-twenty years after this, shall be as great preachers, as great writers, as great statesmen, as great administrators, and as great discoverers as any of those who are now in such fame, and far better suited for the time to come" (Alexander Whyte).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Every mouth which hath not kissed him, verse 18. Kissing the image of Baal was an act of worship, much as Romanists now kiss the Pope's toe or the toe of the bronze image of Jupiter which does duty for St. Peter in the church of St. Peter's at Rome to signify his superiority over any temporal sovereign whose hand is kissed. —H. B. Tristram, in Eastern Customs.

The Mohammedans, on beginning their prayers, bring their thumbs together, kissing them three times. They cannot kiss the hand of the unseen God in token of lowly submission, so kiss their own hand instead.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Elijah's Flight to Horeb. From Mount Carmel King Ahab returned to Jezreel,

in Samaria, and reported to Jezebel the contest on the Mount and Elijah's slaughter of the priests of Baal. The angry queen dispatched a message to Elijah that the gods might slay her if she did not have him put to death within a day. No refuge in Ahab's realm was safe for the prophet. Accompanied by an attendant he did not rest till he reached Beersheba, on the southern frontier of Judah, on the border of the desert. Then alone he started southward. A day's journey brought him through the Negeb, or the South Land, to the Wilderness of Paran. Here, overcome by fatigue and despondency, he rested under the shade of a juniper tree and prayed that he might die, for his life was a failure. On awakening from sleep he found bread and water before him. Rested, and strengthened by the food, he continued his journey to Horeb, where Moses had communed with God.

Horeb is the general name given to the group of mountains in the southern part of the Peninsula of Sinai which includes Mount Sinai. Jebel Musa (the Mount of Moses) rises precipitously to a height of 7,363 feet. "It requires no stretch of the imagination," a traveler writes, "to see the weary prophet taking refuge under the superincumbent rocks while all the fury of a mountain storm plays round him; and then as it passes by, hushing itself, as a thunder storm always hushes itself, into a vast silence thrice accentuated in that desolate spot, one can see the old hero emerging from under the dripping rocks and listening to the still, small voice."

Peninsula of Sinai

The *wilderness of Damascus,* referred to in verse 15, is the Syrian desert in which Damascus is situated.

Abel-meholah, whence Elisha came, was on the Jordan Plain perhaps ten miles south of Bethshan.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

One of the hardest things a teacher has to face is the demon of discouragement. "I am astonished at your hearing anything praiseworthy of one that here seems to be walking alone," wrote Robert Raikes in 1700 to one who had spoken kindly of his efforts to establish the first Sunday-school in the world. From that day to this, Sunday-school teachers have suffered from discouragement. Let us ponder that thought-provoking definition of discouragement as "disenchanted egoism." Let us be wise and, resolutely transcending the range of variable and discouraged moods, find in the fellowship of Christ strength to become the strengtheners of others.

Do you perhaps think that your pupils can know nothing of despair? Recall your own childhood. Does there not come to mind many a moment when your heart seemed breaking, many a tragedy when you thought the sun would never shine again? Very young children have committed suicide, so complete has been their despair. Help your pupils to free themselves from this happiness-destroying demon.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW GOD SPEAKS TO MEN

Beginning the Lesson. "It has been observed of the holy men of Scripture that their most signal failures took place in those points of character for which they were remarkable in excellence," writes Dr. F. W. Robertson. "If there was anything for which Elijah is remarkable, we should say it was superiority to human weakness. He dared to arraign and rebuke his sovereign. Like the commander who cuts down the bridges behind him, leaving himself no alternative but death or victory, he taunted his adversaries, the priests of Baal, but at the same time insured himself a terrible end, in case of failure, from his exasperated foes. Now it was this man—so stern, so iron, so independent, so above all human weakness—of whom it is recorded that in his trial-hour he gave way to a fit of petulance and querulous despondency to which there is scarcely found a parallel."

Many causes united to throw Elijah into the depths of despair. There was the reaction that inevitably follows moments of great exaltation. Then his nerves were overwrought, his physical nature was at a low ebb. The fifteen mile run to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot had exhausted him. He was utterly alone. From a period of intense, exciting activity he had come to one of complete idleness. But the strongest contributing cause lay in his zeal for Jehovah. He was bitterly disappointed. His victory seemed defeat. God's cause would never prosper; he had labored in vain. And with the thought of the defeated cause came the loss

of confidence in himself as the champion of that cause. "I am not better than my fathers," he cried under the juniper tree; "take away my life."

How was he strengthened? Where did he go? Follow with Explanations and Comments.

How Elijah Heard God's Voice. He heard it in the overmastering impulse which first drove him out into the open to protest against the abominations of Baal worship. He heard it when his own conscience forbade him to submit to the threats and flatteries of royal evil-doers. He heard it when he stood calm and fearless upon Carmel, alone and isolated, facing the host of Israel, and entirely at the mercy of his foes had he failed at the crucial moment.

But he ceased to hear it when passion overcame him in the hour of victory and when he sank into despair in the seeming defeat which followed. God could find no

Mount Sinai From a Photograph

opportunity to help him then; Elijah's own heart was making so much noise that the still, small voice was inaudible.—Reginald J. Campbell.

Duty and the Voice of God. When the still, small voice spoke to Elijah, it spoke in rebuke for neglected duty; and one of the chief lessons of the story is that we find God not in evading duty but in seeking it. We may seek to persuade ourselves that it would be far easier to live in communion with God if we lived in some sweet and lonely place where the trouble of the world comes not, but it is a delusion. Where our duty is, there are we nearest God. Where we fulfil the trivial round, the common task with fidelity and diligence, there is God most likely to appear.

And perhaps Elijah has to learn, too, that it is not so much in denunciation of evil as in the quiet activities of good that God is most readily found. Elijah has been too violent, his career has had too much of the fire and earthquake in it. But the finest energies of the soul are constructive, not destructive. There are seven thousand humble folk in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal; has he sought to strengthen their faith? Has he done anything to help them? Is it not a reproach to him that he does not even know that they exist? In the effort to help the good in humble men he will find God nearer than in the work of destroying the bad. When he prays beside some tempted youth that his faith may fail not under the wrath of Jezebel, he will hear the still, small voice more clearly than at the brook Kishon where he destroys the priests of Jezebel. Back, O Elijah, to plain and simple duties, back to the tasks of love and service; go, do the duty that

lies nearest to thee, and so shall thy grief be worked—not dreamed, not meditated, but worked—into a glory.—W. J. Dawson.

God Speaks to Us through Others. Many years ago Charles H. Spurgeon went in the afternoon to a large hall in London to practice the casting of his voice, for he was to speak there in the evening. He stood on the platform and said very quietly, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." A workman in the far end of the building, who believed himself the only one within, heard the words. He could not know whence they came, but they reached his heart. Dropping his tools he went home in great distress of soul. After a week he found God and peace through what was to him the whisper of God.

The Secret of Hearing God. No soul hears God when he does speak, save the listening soul. Have no doubt about that. We must so live that the soul has ears to hear God when he speaks. No one of us knows when he may speak to us. We shall not hear him unless our soul has been trained in the school of prayer. The secret of hearing God lies with the soul that speaks often unto God, and God's ear is never closed, day or night, to his whispering servants. Furthermore, the soul that hears when God speaks is well on the way toward willing obedience to God's call, whatever it may be. We shall be in the way of obedience if we listen, and we shall know how to listen if we first learn how to pray. Prayer is our way toward service. Forget not that.—Robert W. Rogers.

For Discussion. 1. Physical fatigue often accounts for spiritual depression. Often in healing the body, the mind and soul will be healed.

2. The true conception of our work is that we are only links in a chain, and that we can be done without.—W. L. Watkinson.

3. It is a greater thing to set three men to work than to do the work of three men.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What prompted Ahab to call Elijah his enemy? 2. Who was the guiltier, Ahab or Jezebel? 3. Describe the character of Jezebel. 4. What is the nature of covetousness? 5. What does Micah say about those who "covet fields and seize them"? (Micah 2.) 6. Is sin always found out?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE

Beginning the Lesson. Last week we left Elijah exultant, triumphant, unconscious of fatigue as he raced before Ahab's chariot to Jezreel. Had he not won the battle for the Lord, had not Jehovah been proved mighty and Baal powerless, had not the Baal worship been overthrown as the people shouted "Jehovah, he is God!" had not the Baal prophets been put to death without a remonstrance from the cowed king, and had not God sent that rain? But Elijah had not reckoned on Jezebel. Her message came. What was it? Why did she send it? Surely she did not wish to give her victim fair play by forewarning him, for a tigress, as Dr. Maclaren comments, does not give warning of her spring. Perhaps her rage was so great that she simply had to give expression to it in some way at once, and she sent the message without stopping to consider its probable effect. Perhaps she feared the people after all, and in view of their acknowledgment of Jehovah did not dare risk taking Elijah's life at this time, and therefore took this means to put him to flight. Elijah could not brave her fury.

Call for the story of his experiences on the way to Horeb, and then for our lesson story.

A Lesson God Taught Elijah. "I, even I only, am left," Elijah cried. He believed he was the only follower of Jehovah, that every one else was a worshiper of Baal. He learned, however, that God had 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knees in Baal worship.

There is an old story of a hermit who, after forty years of penance and prayers and tears spent upon a bleak, rocky mountainside, desired to know how he had grown in his Master's grace. He prayed fervently to be shown another man whose soul-measure was like his own. His prayer was heard. An angel came and told him to visit the nearest town, where he would find a mountebank playing his tricks.

"His soul, as seen by the light divine,
Is neither better nor worse than thine."

Had his forty years been spent in vain? So the hermit thought, but he sought the man, learned his story, and ascertained that, robber though he long had been, one glorious deed stood to his credit.

Years passed—and the hermit felt a sudden longing, this time a humble one, to see if he were worthy to stand beside one of God's children, whether great or small, who served him truly. This prayer likewise was answered, and he was sent to a humble dwelling where two women, sisters-in-law, had lived together for forty years, to whose credit Heaven reckoned the fact that in all those years not one angry word or look had passd between them. And then, as Francesca Alexander tells the story:

"A sudden flash, as of hurling light,
Then shone within him, and all was bright;
And in a moment were things made clear
Had vexed him many a weary year!
For he, who had thought on earth to view
God's people only a scattered few,
Saw not, in spirit, an army great
Of hidden servants who on him wait.
No saintly legend their names disclose
And no man living their number knows,
Nor can their service and place declare.
The hidden servants are everywhere!
And some are hated, despised, alone;
And some to even themselves unknown.
But the Father's house has room for all,
And never one from his hand can fall!

. . . . . .

And when, that evening, with weary feet
The hermit stood by his lone retreat
And watched, with a tranquil gaze,
The mountains soft in the sunset haze,
And sleeping forest, and field below,
He said, as he saw the star-like glow
Of lights in the cottage windows far,
'How many God's hidden servants are!'"

How God Taught Elijah the Lessons of Patience and Peace. It so happens that when I go to church I have to pass two clocks. One is a big clock. It stands high, on the front of a tall building. The other is quite a small clock. It stands very modestly in the background of a shop window.

Now the big clock and the little clock do not always agree as to the time. And one Sunday morning, when my watch was out of order and I wanted to know the time, there was quite a wide difference of opinion between the big clock and the little clock as to what the time was. And I believed the big clock. It turned out that I had been wrong to trust the big clock. The little clock was right that morning, and the big clock had stopped! But I trusted it because it was big.

The world does this very often. It trusts the big clocks. It listens to the loud voices. If we had on one side of us a loud, strong voice saying to us regularly and noisily, "Twice two are five," and on the other side a still, small voice saying very gently and meekly, "Twice two are four," we should almost be persuaded to say to ourselves very soon, "Twice two are five."

The prophet Elijah had been listening to loud voices—the earthquake, the storm, the fire. He was like the rest of us, he could not help listening to the loud voices; he could not have escaped them even if he had put his fingers in his ears. But then there followed a still, small voice, and that was the voice best worth listening to, for it was God's; his heart had to be very quiet to hear that, but if he had refused to hear it, all the big voices could not have taught him the lessons of patience and peace that he needed to learn.

To us the opinion of the world is the big clock that we are all too willing to trust. Beside that, the message of conscience seems weak and small. But it is God's voice, and we must hush our hearts to listen. For a little clock that gives us the correct time is better than the biggest clock that is out of order.—J. M. E. Ross.

How God Speaks to Us. In our souls God is constantly speaking to us. He warns us against evil, he exhorts and encourages us to do good.

A boy, let us say, has done another a bad turn. The one who has been wronged

is brooding over his wrongs, when suddenly he learns something very ill about his companion, the knowledge of which will do him immense damage. He will have his revenge, he thinks, but while he is comforting himself in this way, a voice is heard, soft but most persistent, saying to him: "It is a mean thing that you have in mind to do, it is a cruel thing; don't return blow for blow, leave him to his thoughts, keep your own unstained." That is the voice of God in the boy's soul.

Or you are out somewhere bent upon your own amusement, when you see some sad accident happen. Your first impulse, after you have gratified your curiosity, is to go after your own pleasure, shut from your mind the sufferings of others, and just follow the rule "everybody for himself." But then you hear another voice saying: "What are the pleasures you may give up compared with the suffering you might help to relieve? Come, make some sacrifices for the good of others, and don't think all your time and money misspent because it isn't spent upon yourself." That, too, is the voice of God in your soul, urging you on to be unselfish and merciful.

Not always does God speak to you through this voice, but you speak to him in prayer.—Simeon Singer.

He that Hath Ears to Hear, Let him Hear. We can all hear eighty thousand people yelling at a football game in the Yale bowl. We can all hear a brass band moving down the street playing one of Sousa's best. We can all hear the roar of the stamp mill crushing the gold out of the quartz. But there are other sounds more significant than all that noise. Can you also hear those voices which speak from a deeper level? Let me ask you to listen for those other voices as they speak in the quiet of this hour.

There is the voice from within! However it came about, there is something in each one of us which says "ought" and "must." It says: "This is the way, walk in it!" It has not been left out of any normal human life. Can you hear that voice? Do you hear it as clearly and as steadily as you ever did, or are you getting "hard of hearing," as we say, in the moral realm?

How would you define this voice from within which we call conscience? Here is a definition given by a philosopher, and I know of none better: "Conscience is the soul's sense of right and wrong as regards its motives." Each one knows whether he means to do right or to do wrong, to help or to harm, to do God's will or to do something else of his own choosing.

Here, then, is the real Mount Sinai, not away yonder in Arabia, but inside! It speaks always in the imperative mood—"Thou shalt": "Thou shalt not." When the boy Christ stood in the temple in the presence of the doctors, the voice from within bade him say: "I must be about my Father's business." When Martin Luther faced the powers of church and state urging him to repent under threat of the direst penalties, it was the voice from within which bade him say: "Here I stand! God help me, I cannot otherwise!" When William Lloyd Garrison faced the mob in the streets of Boston which was howling him down and threatening to lynch him for advocating the abolition of slavery, it was the voice from within which made him say: "I am in earnest; I will not retract; I will not equivocate, and I will be heard." Thus conscience makes heroes or cowards of us all, according to the set of our sails.—Condensed from a Sermon by Charles R. Brown.

Sentence Sermons. When you feel depressed, do a good deed.

Our seasons of discouragement are but wasted time on the road.—Helen Hunt Jackson.

> Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
> Heard through God's silence, and o'er glory's din,
> Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
> Man's conscience is the oracle of God.—Byron.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many of the Ten Commandments did Ahab and Jezebel break? Repeat them. 2. What does Paul say about his lack of covetousness in Acts 20.33? What does Jesus say about covetousness in Lk. 12.15? 4. Tell the parable about covetousness which Jesus gave. 5. How did Ahab meet his death? (1 K. 22.34-38). 6. How did Jezebel? (2 K. 9.30-37.)

ELIJAH IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD

GOLDEN TEXT: Be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers 32.23

LESSON 1 Kings 21 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 94.17-23

1 KINGS 21.5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? 6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. 7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, *and* that dwelt with Naboth. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 10 and set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him to death.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A COVETOUS AND PETTISH KING, verses 1-4. Near Ahab's place in Jezreel was a vineyard which the king coveted. He tried to buy it, but Naboth, its owner, would not part with his inheritance. See the law in Lev. 25.26. The petulant king, unexpectedly thwarted in his wish, like a spoiled child entered his palace, threw himself on his couch and refused to eat.

What an example of the state of mind of one who gives way to selfish desires! What a small matter for a king to get into such a state about! And on what small matters men and women often set their hearts and become miserable because they are unattainable!

II. A MASTERFUL AND WICKED QUEEN, verses 5-10. Jezebel inquired the cause of Ahab's displeasure, and learned that Naboth had refused to sell or exchange his vineyard, which Ahab wished for an herb garden. Tauntingly Jezebel asked him if in truth he ruled in Israel; if he was too weak to get what he wanted, she would get it for him.

So Jezebel wrote letters, which she signed with the king's seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles bidding them proclaim a fast (which would give a pretext for a public assemblage), set Naboth in a prominent place, have ready two witnesses to swear that they heard Naboth curse God and the king, and then have him carried without the city and stoned to death.

"How potent a woman's influence is for good or ill; but an evil woman will more quickly debase her husband than a noble woman will uplift him" (F. B. Meyer).

III. BASE, SUBSERVIENT ELDERS AND NOBLES, verses 11-15. The elders and nobles did as Jezebel's letters directed. The news of Naboth's death was brought to Jezebel and she informed Ahab that he could take possession of the vineyard, for Naboth was dead. His sons also were stoned (2 K. 9.26), and thus no heirs were left to claim the property. Moreover, according to the rabbis, the property of one who had cursed the king fell to him by right. "Ahab was wicked but weak; Jezebel, wicked and strong; the elders, wicked and subservient."

" 'Naboth is in the way! Never mind, murder Naboth!' Is that spirit abroad today in our midst? Don't evade the teaching because of that tragic word 'murder.' There are refined methods of murder. We can murder men

by false witnessing. We can murder them by trumped-up stories, by defamation, by a suggestive shrug. One business man can murder another. That is the spirit of murder which declares to itself, 'No matter who goes down, I must win.' And he who gains his money by the deliberate crushing of his brother will stand before his Lord as the brother's murderer" (J. H. Jowett).

IV. A MIGHTY AVENGER, verses 10-20. Ahab had not dared to commit the crime himself, but he joyfully prepared to reap its results, and went to Jezreel to take possession of the vineyard. Elijah felt impelled by God to go to meet Ahab, accuse him of his guilt, and pronounce doom upon him and his house.

"Hast thou killed and also taken possession?"—these words hold Ahab guilty of the murder which Jezebel instigated. Ahab knew that Jezebel was going to get possession of the vineyard, and he knew that she could only do so by foul means. He was content to let her get it in any way she chose. And when she had accomplished her purpose, he was eager to reap the fruit of her crime. Josephus says that when Ahab learned what Jezebel had done "he sprang from his bed with delight."

Ancient Seals

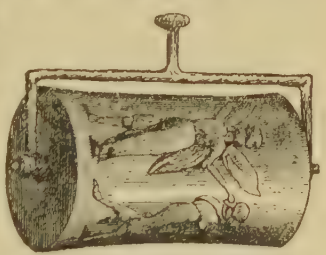
In God's sight the weak mortal who lets another do the wicked work and rejoices in the spoils has sold himself to do evil as surely as though he did it with his own hands. A man who hires an assassin to kill another is held by law as guilty as though he did the deed himself.

The doom to be pronounced was this: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." It was not literally fulfilled in Ahab's case (1 K. 21.29; 22.37, 38), but his grandson, Jehoram, was slain by Jehu in the vineyard that Ahab had seized, and then his dynasty came to an end.

"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" the frightened king gasped as the stern prophet appeared in his pathway. Thus conscience frightens and condemns. "I have found thee," was Elijah's answer, "because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah."

"Thou smotest a weak thing and laid it low;
It could not rise and smite thee back. And so,
Thou thinkest thou shalt go unsmitten? know,
The Force Invincible received thy blow" (Mynta Lockett Avary).

Be sure your sin will find out you. Our Golden Text reads a little differently, but you is the emphatic word; the text does not mean that your sin will be found out, but rather that you will be found out by your sin, that your sin will find out you. Your sin may never be found out, but it will find you out, for you cannot sin without suffering in character, though you may sin without suffering in reputation.



A Seal Cylinder

V. A HUMBLED KING, verses 21-29. When Elijah told Ahab of the retribution that would overtake him and Jezebel and their descendants, Ahab humbled himself, put on sackcloth and fasted. "Ahab is a curious compound of kingly cowardice, nerveless knavery, and fluctuating goodness. His wife is devilish, but he is flabby, bent like a willow wand to her stronger will, a tool in her hands when she is present, but ready to yield in a measure to Elijah when that mighty prophet strides upon the scene." "Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's day will I bring the evil upon his house," was the pronouncement. Jezebel, "this cursed woman," as Jehu called her, was thrown to the pavement from a high window, trodden under foot by horses, and eaten by the dogs of the street (2 K. 9.30-37).

Ahab sinned in vain. He thought to reap an advantage, but he reaped a penalty. One who injures another wields a boomerang which recoils upon himself.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

She wrote letters, verse 8. The excavations carried on in Samaria show that the Israelites had a cheap and easy method of sending written messages. Fragments of earthenware have been unearthed written upon with a reed pen in an ink made of pure carbon or lampblack. Professor Reisner thinks them the earliest specimens of Israelitish work contemporaneous with the Bible, and that they may have been written on in the time of Ahab.

The vineyard which he refused to give thee for money, verse 15. When the children of Israel entered Canaan, each family was given a portion of the land which was to remain its property forever. If a man was compelled by adverse circumstances to part with his land, it could not be disposed of forever. In the Jubilee year, every man was to return to his property. A mortgage could run, at the most, only for a part of forty-nine years. "According to the multitude of the years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years thou shalt

When a neighbor coveted the house in which Charles Reade resided, Reade had a sign-board erected bearing the legend, Naboth's Vineyard.

diminish the price of it," for it was thus "the harvest" of the ground and not the ground itself which was sold. You recall from the story of Ruth that when a family was forced to offer land for sale, it was the duty of the kinsman-redeemer to purchase the land. When the daughter of Zelophehad came to Moses and told him that their father had died, leaving no sons, Moses declared that they were then entitled to the same rights as sons. "Let them be married to whom they think best," he ordered; "only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers."

Orientals have always been unwilling to sell inherited property. When Shemer sold the hill of Samaria to Omri for his capital, we are told that "He called the city which he built after the name of Shemer," and orientalists have thought that this must have been Shemer's condition on which he parted with his inheritance, for thus he retained for himself the "remembrance."

The dogs shall eat Jezebel, verse 23. The bodies of poor Hindus and of persons who have received public punishment are thrown into the rivers, and floating to the side, are devoured by dogs, vultures, and crows.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When did David send a letter which ordered a murder? Who courageously rebuked him for this sin? How did he rebuke him? What experiences has Ahab had with Elijah?

The Time of the Lesson. Probably some time has elapsed since Elijah's visit to Horeb, our last lesson, for persecution has ceased, he is no longer afraid of Jezebel as he faces Ahab and denounces her crime and his.

The Effect of Ahab's Sin. After the division of the kingdom it was never possible for the king of Israel, however such a man as Omri might have wished, to make himself a despot. The people were jealous of their rights. Elijah was the

George J. Tobin

JEZEBEL

And Jezebel said unto Ahab: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. —1 Kings 21.7

defender of their liberties, the champion in special of the free landholder. The murder of Naboth seems to have aroused the people more than did the Baal worship of the royal home, and to have had greater influence in bringing about the revolution which overthrew the house of Omri.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jezreel, the modern Zerim, is on a spur of Mount Gilboa two hundred feet above the Plain of Esdraelon. From it there is a fine view westward across the plain to Mount Carmel, and eastward down to the Jordan Valley. Apparently it was the summer residence of the kings of Israel; perhaps it either replaced or rivaled Samaria as the capital in Ahab's time. Naboth's vineyard seems to have lain before the palace windows. Today there are wine-presses cut into the rock on the eastern side of the hill.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Be sure your sin will find you out. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. The wages of sin is death. Our studies of Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Ahab, have all taught these lessons. Call upon your pupils for historical instances and modern instances in which retribution has followed personal or national iniquity.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

EXPOSING CORRUPTION

Beginning the Lesson. On the site of ancient Samaria, below the remains of Roman, Greek and Babylonian periods, excavations have revealed the ruins of a massive structure belonging to the ancient Hebrew occupation. It is believed to have been the ivory palace which Ahab built for himself, 1 K. 22.39. An alabaster vase inscribed with the name of Ahab's contemporary, Osorkon II of Egypt, was found, and also a hundred clay tablets which may have belonged to Ahab's library One of them is said to be a letter from the Assyrian king sent to King Ahab, and a number of them contain an inventory of the royal palace. In a storeroom adjoining the palace were found fragments of pottery written in ink, in the ancient Hebrew script, which were labels for jars of oil and wine. The jars were filled with "wine of the vineyard of the Tell." How that recalls the scene when Ahab lay in his palace in a fit of sulks because he could not add Naboth's vineyard to his possessions!

Jezebel and Lady Macbeth. Recall that scene in Macbeth where Lady Macbeth urges her husband on to the murder of the king. Macbeth has told her that

> "We will proceed no further in this business:
> He hath honor'd me of late,"

and then Lady Macbeth's scorn blazes forth, and she acuses him of being a coward,

> "Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
> Like the poor cat i' the adage."

> "Prithee, peace," Macbeth answers:
> "I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none."

Her words prevail and Macbeth nerves himself to murder Duncan the king. But he brings back to their chamber the bloody daggers.

> "Why did you bring those daggers from the place?
> They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
> The sleeping grooms with blood,"

commands Lady Macbeth. But Macbeth replies:

> "I'll go no more:
> I am afraid to think what I have done;
> Look on't again I dare not."

"Infirm of purpose! Give me the dagger!" then exclaims Lady Macbeth, and when she returns from carrying out her purpose she cries: "My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white."

How like Lady Macbeth's "Give me the dagger!" is Queen Jezebel herself! "A very Jezebel," we say of some strong-willed, masterful woman, who fears neither God nor man, a Lucretia Borgia who dominated the papacy, a Catherine de Medici who really was the one who ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

From the time that Jezebel entered the kingdom of Israel as its queen till her death, her evil deeds form a large part of its history, and her evil influence was continued in the Southern Kingdom through her daughter Athaliah, who married the son of Jehoshaphat.

A Woman's Influence. Recall F. W. Boreham's remarks, given on page 105.

The Great Ahabs that Swallow up the Poor Naboths. Soon after William's accession to the Prussian throne, he coveted six acres that adjoined his Potsdam property. The owner refused to part with it for the sum the Kaiser offered to pay. Through his agent the Kaiser raised his offer to four hundred pounds, but the owner said that seven hundred pounds was the lowest figure at which he would sell. A month later the owner received notice that his land was required for military purposes, and he would be paid one hundred and fifty pounds. He was obliged to give up the land. Six months later the Kaiser purchased it from the government for the exact sum which he had first offered.

There are many other Ahabs who "outbid, undersell, sometimes deliberately set themselves to extinguish every business which competes with their own, and do everything which the law permits and a great many things which the moral law does not permit to accomplish their end."

Murder and Punishment in the United States. Fewer than five per cent of the murders committed are followed by convictions. In Germany fifty per cent is the record. Greater efficiency of foreign police and greater sentimentality among American jurors, which leads them to acquit confessed murderers on all sorts of pleas, seem to be the reasons for the way justice is meted out in the two countries.

The Courage of Convictions

Speak for the right.
A voice, when other men are silent,
A word, when other men are wrong,
Spoken in love, with courage vibrant,
Will summon men and make them strong.
Speak for the right.

Strike for the right.
A blow, when other men are absent,
An act for right, when others fear,
Given in love, with courage instant,
Will help to bring God's kingdom near.
Speak for the right.

—*Clarence A. Vincent.*

Correctors of Faults. The persons who are most successful in correcting the faults of others are usually those who take least pleasure in doing it. Some people find a malign satisfaction in noticing the shortcomings of their friends and in calling attention to them. Their comments, however just, are seldom welcome; they leave a rankling sense of injury in the person whom they seek to benefit. Wrath rouses stubbornness; rather than give the critic the satisfaction of knowing that his words have produced an impression, we are likely to persevere in our faulty ways.

On the other hand, when through some chance it becomes a friend's duty to tell us what we ought to be told about ourselves, and the friend obviously dislikes the task, and we drag the unwilling truth from him, how salutary for us is the experience! We art hurt, of course, but we are not irritated or angered; there is no other emotion to counteract the feeling of dismay at the discovery of our error, our fault, or our folly, or to suppress the instant desire to make what amends we can.

Nearly every one has to be in some capacity or other and at some time or other a professional corrector of faults. The parent is a corrector of the faults of his children; the employer is a corrector of the faults of his employee; the foreman is a corrector of the faults of the workman; the workman is a corrector of the faults of the apprentice. Whatever your position may be as a professional corrector of faults, you will probably get the best results if in making your corrections you show the spirit of the amateur rather than that of the professional. You will then not assert your authority unpleasantly; there will be nothing acid or contemptuous in your criticism; you will treat the person at fault with the courtesy that one human

being should show to another, and not with callousness—as if you were interested only in results, and not in the people who produce the results.—The Youth's Companion.

The Need of the Age.

"The age wants heroes—heroes who shall dare
To struggle in the solid ranks of truth;
To clutch the monster error by the throat;
To bear opinion to a loftier seat;
To blot the era of oppression out,
And lead a universal freedom on."

For Discussion. 1. The pride of position. The tyrant's excuse.

2. Did Jezebel love Ahab? Does that kind of woman love that kind of man? Is there excuse for the commission of a wrong for the sake of love? It means, "I care more for your immediate pleasure than for your real prosperity; I care more for your gratitude than for your good." Can love of country lead to deeds comparable to Jezebel's deed for love of Ahab? Examples.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Name the great prophets of the eighth century B. C. 2. What is a prophet? 3. Are there prophets today? If so, name several. 4. Name some of life's minor prophets. 5. To what service does God call all Christians? 6. Are we making the right response to his call?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE REBUKE OF WRONG

Beginning the Lesson. What does it mean to sulk? When is the right time to engage in this pastime? The St. Nicholas gives the rule:—

"It is bad luck to cry on Monday. To cry on Tuesday makes eyes red. Crying on Wednesday is bad for children's heads and for the heads of other people. It is said that if a child begins to cry on Thursday, he will find it hard to stop. It is not best for children to cry on Friday. It makes them unhappy. Never cry on Saturday. It is too busy a day. Tears shed on the Sabbath are sad and bitter. Children should on no account cry at night. The nights are for sleep. They may cry whenever they please, but not at any of these times, unless it is for something serious.

"I wrote down the rules just as the old man gave them to me. Of course they will be of no use to boys and girls who are past six, for those children do not cry. The wise man meant them for the little ones—the millions of little boys and girls who want to do the right thing and the very best thing."

Our lesson text begins with a king who was enjoying a fit of sulks. Who was he? What was his trouble? What do you think of such a king? How did he attain his wish? What did Elijah do about it?

The Fearless Prophet Rebukes the King. From the capital of Samaria, as it would seem, Ahab rose up and went down the steep descent which leads into the Plain of Jezreel. He went in state, in his royal chariot. Behind him, probably in the same chariot, were two of the great officers of his court; Bidkar, and one whose name afterwards bore a dreadful sound to the House of Ahab—Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. And now they neared the city of Jezreel; and now the green terraces appeared, which Ahab at last might call his own, with no obstinate owner to urge against him the claims of law and of property; and there was the fatal vineyard, the vacant plot of ground waiting for its new possessor.

There was a solitary figure standing on the deserted ground as though the dead Naboth had risen from his bloody grave to warn off the king from his unlawful gains. It was Elijah. As in the most pathetic of Grecian dramas, the unjust sentence has no sooner been pronounced on the unfortunate Antigone, than Tiresias rises up to pronounce the curse on the Theban king, so, in this grander than any Grecian tragedy, the well-known prophet was there to utter the doom of the House of Ahab. He has come, we know not whence. He has arisen; he has come down at the word of the Lord to meet the king. Few and short were the words which fell from those awful lips, but they must have fallen like thunderbolts on that royal company. They were never forgotten.

The prophet and the king parted, to meet no more. But the king's last act was an act of penitence: on every anniversary of Naboth's death he wore the Eastern

signs of mourning. And the prophet's words were words of mercy. It was as if the revelation of "the still, small voice" was becoming clearer and clearer. For in the heart of Ahab there was a sense of better things, and that sense is recognized and blessed.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

A Queen's Wish. Caroline, Queen of George II, thought that St. James's Park, which adjoined the palace, would make a fine royal garden. She asked the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, what it would cost to shut it up from the public. "Oh, a trifle, madam," was the answer. "A trifle? I know better," said the Queen. "It will be expensive; but I wish you to tell me the cost as near as you can guess." "Why, madam, I believe the whole will cost but three crowns," he calmly replied. The Queen saw that he meant the crowns of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and said, "Then I will think no more about it."

An Eloquent Silence. A man of brilliant ability once showed himself wilfully immoral. He suffered a brief season of unpleasant notoriety in the newspapers, and then he returned to his home city and prospered. It almost seemed that his open defiance of the moral and religious convictions of the community had been good advertising for his business.

In his city, a few years later, there was a public meeting of men. The principal speaker was a man of national eminence. He began by referring to the man of whom this story is written. He said that he was proud to pay a tribute to the achievement of one whose brilliant talent and constructive imagination were recognized throughout the country, and even across the sea. He spoke warmly, eloquently. Then he paused for applause.

You might have heard a pin drop. No one clapped. There were no hisses. There was simply an eloquent silence.

Two men walked away from the meeting together. One of them, a young man, expressed his surprise.

"If it had been a religious meeting, or if women had been present, I should not have wondered," said he. "But I thought such an audience would have discriminated between the man's genius and his private character."

"If it had been a man who had broken down under strong temptation, and who was making an honest effort to do right—what then?" the other asked.

"I think they would have applauded him."

"They certainly would. There was no conspiracy of silence. There could not be, for no one knew in advance what was to be said. But in that moment not a man felt in his heart impelled to clap his hands."

"Still, I have heard it said that he is making more money now than ever before."

"That may be true. But how much money would you have given, if you had been in his place, to change that accusing silence into some indication of friendliness and approval?"—The Youth's Companion.

The Rebuke of Wrong. Hilda Richmond, in the Pittsburg Christian Advocate, tells of a boy adopted from a State institution. When an agent sent out to investigate the prospective home questioned the neighbors about the desirability of the foster parents, all were favorable or noncommittal except one, who told the truth at the risk of incurring ill will. She saved the sensitive-spirited boy from an environment that would have meant death to his finer nature. Another, a man, had the courage to report to the police a big bully, whose father was also a dangerous bully, for frightening timid children, and broke up a situation that had given many a mother a heartache. More champions of Jehovah are needed in everyday life who will risk their peace and safety to right a wrong in the neighborhood.—John F. Cowan, in Sunday School Journal.

Sentence Sermons. Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Jesus.

Those who approve the sin of others and share in its spoils, are guilty of the sin.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what century did Elisha live? 2. How did he receive his call to be a prophet? 3. In what century did Amos and Isaiah live? 4. How was Amos led to be a prophet? 5. What was Isaiah's vision? 6. What was its effect? 7. What opportunities have you had to volunteer for God's service? 8. What is the Student Volunteer Movement?

THE CALL OF THE PROPHET

GOLDEN TEXT: And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. Isaiah 6.8

LESSON 1 Kings 19.19, 20; Amos 7.10-15; Isaiah 6.1-8

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 40.5-10

1 KINGS 19.19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing, with twelve yoke of *oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed over unto him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again; for what have I done to thee?

AMOS 7.14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees: 15 and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

ISAIAH 6.1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain his covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. 8 And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CALL OF THE PROPHET ELISHA, 1 K. 19.19, 20. Elisha was plowing with twelve pair of oxen before him, eleven pair guided by his servants while he himself guided the twelfth pair. Elijah approached and cast upon Elisha his mantle, which was the characteristic garb of the prophets, Zech. 13.4: this was Elisha's call to the prophet's office. It is an interesting fact, by the way, that the insignia which graduates of certain colleges in England wear on appropriate occasions—the lambskin hood or cloak—can be traced back to Elijah's mantle, which was the skin of some animal dressed with the hair left on. "I wish that his mantle might fall upon me," is an expression not infrequently heard from one who covets another's gifts or graces.

Elisha ran after Elijah and promised to follow him after he had said farewell to his father and mother. And Elijah said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to thee?" "Whatever sacrifice was involved in the prophetic call was to be made ungrudgingly. Elijah, like our Lord, would have no half-hearted service: Compare Lk. 9.59-62" (One Volume Commentary).

II. THE CALL OF THE PROPHET AMOS, Amos 7.14, 15. "Then answered Amos." His consciousness of his divine commission upheld him in the face of the threats and commands of the high priest Amaziah: see verses 10-13.

"I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore trees." Sycomore trees yielded fruit which would ripen only after being punctured and to do this was the humble and scantily remunerating task of Amos. He was not a member of a prophetic guild, he was an "inspired farmer" chosen by God to be his messenger to Israel.

"The faithful performance of the commonplaces of daily life is the best preparation for any great demand that may suddenly break in upon our lives" (F. B. Meyer).

"And Jehovah took me from following the flock." Amos has been called a second and greater Elijah. Elijah came from the grazing district east of the Jordan; Amos from among the herdsmen of Tekoa, in the sandy uplands south of Tekoa he had pastured his flocks.

"And Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." He could no more help prophesying, he tells us, than one can help fearing when the lion roars.

"The lion hath roared, who will not fear; Jehovah hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

III. THE CALL OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH, Isa. 6.1-8. Uzziah, King of Judah, had been a master of statecraft and diplomacy, successful in the arts both of war and peace. He had walled cities and big armies and great wealth. Uzziah had been Isaiah's patron, all the young man's hopes for his country were centered in the great king. Uzziah's death (see The Historical Background) seemed to him irreparable. He saw the corruption of Judah and also the distant war-clouds that were threatening the life of the nation, for Judah lay in the path of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III, who was beginning his conquest of the western world. Could Uzziah's son, who lacked his father's ability and energy, rule wisely in such a crisis? Isaiah may well have been tortured with fear till in the temple his fears took flight, for he learned there that whoever was the earthly ruler, Israel's real king was Jehovah.

A Sycomore Tree

News of the death of some one we know makes us thoughtful and solemn, but the announcement of the death of a man who has had great influence upon the affairs of a nation and whose last days, like Uzziah's, had been in eclipse, brings with it a desire like Isaiah's to sit down and ponder God's ways with men and nations. While thus meditating Isaiah had his vision of Jehovah. "Meditation is the eye wherewith we see God," said St. Ambrose.

"Business men experience what they call 'hunches.' Mathematicians solve hard problems in their dreams. And spiritually-minded men and women become sharply aware of God" (James Beebe).

In Isaiah's vision God was "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." "The conception of Isaiah's vision is singularly pure and lofty. It is a worshiper's thought when he draws near to God. The vision is but the service in the temple transfigured. The prophet fell into a trance while beholding the service and musing on its meaning. Suddenly the walls went apart, and the roof lifted itself up till it seemed the dome of God's palace on high under which he stood, and the Lord and King sat upon his throne receiving the adoration of all holy beings" (A. B. Davidson).

"The point of contact of this narrative with us is this: that what the church wants today more than anything else is this vision of God, the recovery of what I may almost call a lost consciousness of God"
(Charles Brown).

"And his train (or 'skirts,' Revised Version) filled the temple."

"No face; only the sight
Of a sweeping garment vast and white
With a heaven that I could recognize" (Browning).

Above Jehovah stood the seraphim, angelic figures, "all wings and voice, expressive of service and praise." "They are not angels," Phillips Brooks tells us; "they are rather expressions of the forces of the universe waiting there beside the throne of God; they are titanic beings in whom is embodied everything of strength and obedience which anywhere in any of the worlds of God is doing his will." These majestic beings stood in the presence of the Divine Being, and each one reverently covered his face with a pair of wings, for he was neither able nor worthy to look upon God's resplendent brightness; and humbly he covered his feet with another pair of wings, for in that sacred Presence he was overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness; and eagerly he used the third pair of wings to fly, for he was winged for service.

"We talk as if, if we could understand God through and through, it would be happier and better for us. The intimation of Isaiah's vision is something different from that. It is the glory of his seraphim that they stand in the presence of a God so great that they can never comprehend him. His brightness overwhelms them. They cover their faces with their wings, and

their hearts are filled with reverence, which is the first of the conditions of complete human life which they represent" (Phillips Brooks).

And one cried unto another, and chanted, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts," and the other responded (as in antiphonal song), "The whole earth is full of his glory." This thunderous praise shook the foundations of the thresholds of the temple, and it was filled with smoke, the symbol of the Divine Presence. Could a conception of Jehovah be expressed with more majestic simplicity?

An Assyrian Winged Figure

In the presence so awe-inspiring Isaiah had an overwhelming sense of his own unworthiness and that of all the people. "Woe is me!" he cried, "for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips." The sin is regarded as concentrated on his lips, for the work of a prophet was largely done by the lips. Recall Peter's exclamation as he compared himself with his Master, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord, Lk. 5.8.

"You may think your linen is clean when you leave Chamouni in the morning for an Alpine climb, but when you get up among the snows, and still ascend, your linen, that seemed so white, appears black in contrast with the pure vesture of the Alps. The deeper conviction of sin is always preceded by a clearer apprehension of the purity of God" (F. B. Meyer).

And there was yet another reason for Isaiah's exclamation, "Woe is me"—"for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God? 1 S. 6.20; Ex. 33.20.

From rapture to abasement Isaiah had passed; now he passes from abasement to the assurance of forgiveness. One of the seraphim touched his mouth with a live coal from off the altar and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thy sin is forgiven." Fire is a symbol and an agent of purification. "When you strip away the imagery, and get down to the bare, warm truth, this is what you find—a man whose sense of moral lack had prompted that open confession, cleansed in that high hour by the direct action of the divine Spirit upon his soul" (Charles R. Brown).

And Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?" Isaiah's sin being taken away, he was able to discern the voice of God. He hears these words, not as a command, but as a request, and answers not from compulsion, but of free choice. Isaiah's response was immediate; he said, "Here am I; send me." "He did not say, 'Here are any number of fine people, send them. Here is a man who could perform the task better than I, send him.' He said what every man must say who means to stand right in the Day of Judgment, 'Here am I, send me'" (Charles R. Brown).

Our words *reverie* and *reveille* look much alike, and when the Americanized pronunciation of the latter word is used they sound much alike, but, as a writer in The Christian Advocate asserts, in meaning they are "as far apart as the bottomless pit and the dome of heaven. Reverie belongs to the armchair; reveille to the front line of effort." Isaiah mused about the tasks of his time, but he also promptly faced the call for action.

"Let it be noted that the call was silent as to when, whither and wherefore. Equally there was in the reply a surrender which kept nothing back; the utterance was that of a man who asked no reason why, and demanded no explanation, but placed himself without reserve at the disposal of the Lord of Hosts" (James W. Thirtle).

The view of God gave Isaiah a view of self; confession of sin brought a consciousness of salvation; the reception from God led to service for God. "A vision of God that reveals first one's own sin and then the need and call of one's generation, and leads on to devoted, wise service, is genuine."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Elijah cast his mantle upon him, 1 K. 19.19. When a great teacher dies he bequeaths his patched mantle to the disciple that he most esteems, and the moment

the elect disciple puts on the holy mantle he is vested with the whole power and sanctity of his predecessor. The mantles used by ascetics and saints have always been the objects of religious veneration in the East. The holy man's power is founded upon his sacred character, and that rests upon his poverty and contempt of worldly goods. His mantle is his all, and its transfer marks out his heir. Some of those sacred mantles can be traced for seven centuries, and their value increases with their age.—John Malcolm, in History of Persia.

I saw the Lord, Isa. 6.1. There are Moslem zealots who have journeyed to Mecca and gazed upon the places which to them are sacred, and then, lest their eyes which have seen the holy city should profane that vision by looking thereafter upon unhallowed scenes, they have knelt down before white-hot bricks and let their heat burn out all power of sight forever. "The last thing I saw on earth was the Holy City," they proudly proclaim; "since then I have not seen." Such a Moslem pilgrim sees his Holy City and then deliberately blinds himself and makes himself useless. An Isaiah sees the Holy God and strengthened by that vision volunteers for service.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What vision did Peter have, and what was its purpose?

The Background of 1 Kings 19.19, 20. These verses immediately follow our lesson of last week. "Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room," had been the direction which came to Elijah at Sinai.

The Background of Amos 7.14, 15. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah are the four great prophets of the eighth century B. C.

Jeroboam II was king of Israel. When Amaziah the priest reported to him that Amos was conspiring against him, declaring that Jeroboam should die by the sword, and Israel should surely be led away captive out of the land. Then Amaziah came to Amos himself and said: "Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah (whence Amos came) and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house."

These efforts to silence him the prophet answered by affirming that God had called him to be a prophet and had bade him prophesy unto Israel.

The Background of Isaiah 6.1-8. Uzziah, one of the outstanding kings of Judah, died about 740 B. C., after reigning fifty years. Isaiah grew up under the shadow of Uzziah's greatness, when the Southern Kingdom was in its glory. Of Uzziah it is written that God helped him and made him prosperous, and his name spread abroad, and he was marvelously helped till he was strong; and then suddenly his glory was eclipsed, he was stricken with leprosy for usurping the priest's office. The shock to Isaiah was great. He sought the temple, turning from the earthly king to the King of Kings, and there he had his vision of Jehovah and his call to service.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Elisha was a native of *Abel-meholah,* a village in the Jordan valley.

Amos was a native of *Tekoa,* a village a few miles south of Bethlehem, on the border of the Judæan wilderness. *Bethel,* where he prophesied, was the capital of Israel, or the Northern Kingdom.

Isaiah lived in *Jerusalem.*

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

It has been remarked that there is a kinship in the dreams of youth in all ages, and that the call of Isaiah is not different in essentials but only in degree from the call that may arouse a young man or woman of today to life's great purpose. Life, even the most successful, is unsatisfying unless illumined by visions. Visions come to those who are able to see them. Awaken in your pupils the aspiration to see the vision, hear the call, and respond to the summons for service; to be not a conscript, but a volunteer.

"There are some who delude themselves with the hope that Almighty God will take and thrust them into some field of service," Professor McFadyen writes.

"But is that his way of dealing with men? He did not so deal with Isaiah. He did not say, 'Isaiah, come hither, I summon thee.' The cry is a general one, thrown out, as it were, across the world: 'Who will go?' and it is for the man who has seen the vision, and felt the impulse to service rise in his heart, to say for himself, 'Behold me, send me.'"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE NEED FOR MODERN PROPHETS

Beginning the Lesson. When Dr. Peter Akers denounced slavery and made a prediction—strange for that day—that the time would come when slavery would be overthrown, there was among his hearers a young man named Abraham Lincoln. As Lincoln walked home from church that morning he confided to a friend that during the sermon he had had a vivid vision of that coming time and also a remarkable conviction that in some way he would in after years have an important share in bringing about that great consummation. May we not say that that was the call of Lincoln the prophet?

Our texts narrate the call of three Old Testament prophets; who were they? How did the call to be a prophet come to Joshua? To Amos? To Isaiah? When did each live? In what respects were their calls similar?

What Was the Work of a Prophet? We all know the meaning of the word "prophet" in our current speech. We use it to mean a predictor—a foreteller—a man who tells what is going to happen. We have men who predict the weather. They tell you today what the weather will be tomorrow. Sometimes they tell you what a season is going to be. We have another kind of prophet in our midst, the man who tells you when the end of the world is coming. Any man who claims the ability to name the date of the end of the world is an impostor or a fanatic. The popular meaning of the word "prophet" is a foreteller of future events. But that is not the biblical meaning of the word.

According to the Bible a prophet is one who speaks for another. The religious prophet is a man who speaks for God. All the Old Testament prophets now and then predicted, but that was not their main business. Their main business was not with the future, but with the present. They were interpreters of experience, the experience through which their countrymen were passing. To them events were words of the Lord, and they were called to explain the meaning of these events to the people. Experience is the medium of revelation. God does not speak clearly to the average man through human experience, and the work of the prophet is to tell men what this experience means.—Condensed from Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, by C. E. Jefferson.

Why We Do not Have more Prophets Today. Professor Monroe told our class at the opening lesson of our last year in the School of Oratory that we had made very satisfactory progress thus far in our course. "Indeed," he added, "there is only one more lesson which you have to learn." We all listened with eagerness for the final lesson which was to make us orators. "Young people," he added, "you must get rid of yourselves. The orator is the man who can empty himself of self and become the mere hollow tube through which the aspirations of his age voice themselves." So the prophet is the man who can empty himself of self and become the mere hollow tube through which, not the aspirations and passions of men voice themselves, but through which God speaks to the world. Do you see why there are few prophets among men?—James W. Bashford, in The Demand for Christ.

If a Prophet Should Come. Men proclaim that the great need of the hour is a spiritual leader, a prophet. But what would happen if a prophet should come? Would men hear him with enough patience to discover the prophet in him? The prophet, it must be remembered, is a prophet because he sees farther than his contemporaries do.

If we are to have spiritual leadership, then, we must make it possible for potential spiritual leaders to be heard. We cannot tell a true prophet from a false one if we refuse to listen to both of them.

To be sure, every false prophet will rise up and demand that we hear him. False prophets will annoy us, will hound us. But occasionally among them will appear one whose modest, yet unfaltering, voice is authentic to the receptive ear. And all the embarrassment of the false prophets is as nothing compared with the experience of coming face to face with the genuine, penetrating soul, who sees

with such clearness that he can point the way not merely to negative safety, but to a positive salvation.

But we shall miss if we insist that men see only as they saw yesterday, if we doubt men's capacity to devise means of going farther than they have yet gone.—Rollo Walter Brown.

How to Produce Prophets Today. In his book entitled The Freedom of the Preacher, Dr. William Pierson Merrill utters trenchant words about preachers as prophets and the standardization of preachers. "The prophet is the preacher's ideal," he declares. "The humblest preacher looks at the spokesman of God, afire with the truth, filled with the Spirit, accredited with the touch of the Eternal World, and says, 'That is what I would be, if I could.' Yet few attain to the ideal.

"The preacher is at once more and less than the prophet—widely more, immeasurably less. More, because he must serve and run and walk on many lines, while the prophet sends his full fiery force down one straight line; less, because only at rare moments, if at all, does he enter into the glory of inspiration, when he knows that what he speaks is the living word of the living God to living men, which they question at their peril.

"How the prophet is needed throughout the world's life today! Never has there been so vivid and profound and diffused a consciousness that things are wrong, so utter a bewilderment as to how they may be set right. There is an excess of critical analysis, and a dearth of constructive synthesis. How we need a prophet or two, who can see straight and far, can speak with passion and with authority, and can prepare the way of the Lord, laying straight into the dim times to come the lines on which God's Kingdom may get forward.

"A practical question presents itself: What can we of the church do to facilitate the coming of the prophet? It is well to remember how once four great seers came within a few years of each other. Something in the eighth century before Christ favored the emergence of the prophet. How can we reproduce those conditions? It is well also to remember the long centuries of barrenness and mechanism, when no voice was heard to speak with original authority. It would be well could we realize how, in every century, men who might have been spokesmen for God have dwindled into phonographs, playing standardized records. How many youths every year who might have spoken with prophetic power have had the spark of inspiration quenched by the untoward conditions in church and school and social order! It is of the very essence of the prophetic gift that it cannot be standardized. Let the universities and colleges stand like a rock against any and every attempt to limit freedom of thought or to restrict the absolute rights of the scientific method and its results."

Dr. Merrill notes several ways in which the church can encourage the production of prophets: (1) by insisting on the adequate recognition, all through our educational processes, of the truth that religion is an indispensable element in education for citizenship; by using all the influence it possesses or can set in motion to make this recognition operative in the educational processes of America.

(2) Inside its own life, the church can do much to foster the free spirit of prophecy. It can consciously and indefatigably stand for the culture and encouragement of the personal life. We must also care for our Church schools, and for the religious education of our youth.

(3) By emphasizing the importance of home life and of home training in religion. Here is the most vital and indispensable source of the prophetic in our social life. Men of God came out of godly homes. Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist, Jesus —their biographers do not feel that they have adequately accounted for the line these great souls took and followed until they have told us of their birth, yes, of the longings and prayers, the faith and devotion, of their parents before their birth. Prophets are made by their fathers and mothers more than by any other human influences. Out of homes where God is known come the men that know him; they know him so well because, from earliest days, they have lived with him every day.

(4) By giving larger freedom in its own ongoing for the play of individuality in religion. There is a strong conviction that the church prizes conformity rather than freedom, and likes the old better than the new; that it holds back the makers of trails and honors those who drive in the ruts. As far as this is true the church is discouraging the prophets and making their appearance less probable. The church ought to be known as the institution which, more than any other, calls men and incites them to freedom, freedom of thought, of speech, of action. When shall

we see churches and congregations in their choice of men for the ministry caring more for freedom of spirit than for conformity, delighted at every revelation of original thought and feeling, more afraid of quenching the spirit and despising prophesyings, than of allowing variations from the faith once delivered by the doctors? Once there was a youth who sat in the midst of the theological leaders of his day and of his church, asking them questions, and astonishing them with the freedom and originality of his point of view, and he became the Preacher who spake as never man spake.

For Discussion. 1. If all of us could feel that God expects some special performance of duty from us, what a power in our lives such a feeling would be!—Edgar Whitaker Work.

2. Prophets and the Christian church. See George Adam Smith's Isaiah; chapter II of Ambassadors of God, S. Parkes Cadman; How God Calls Men, Association Press; The Christian Century, Feb. 11, 1926.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire Book of Amos. 2. What is the meaning of the last part of verse 6? 3. Of the first part of verse 7? 4. Of verse 8? 5. What is the situation today as regards the keeping of the Eighteenth Amendment? 6. What are the opponents of the Prohibition Law doing? 7. What are its advocates doing? 8. What is our class doing?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE SPIRIT OF THE VOLUNTEER

Beginning the Lesson. One is always deeply interested in learning what led famous men to take up their life work. Today our lesson texts tell us how three men were led to become God's special messengers. What do we call such special messengers? Who were the prophets? How was Elisha called to be a prophet? What led Amos to become God's messenger? How was Isaiah led to volunteer for the work?

The Spirit of Isaiah the Volunteer. It was in the year that King Uzziah died that Isaiah had his vision of the Lord. The death of that great king explains his experience. "When Isaiah was a lad the magnificence and power of so great a king had dazzled his mind, till he felt that no one could be like him. Then one day there came a blow which struck him to the heart—the news ran through the city that King Uzziah was dead. The wail of grief rose from the palace and traveled along the streets. How mysterious and tragic a thing it was that a monarch so great and splendid should pass out into the silence! Isaiah's whole soul was stirred with the sorrow of it. In that mood Isaiah went to the temple. It was the natural place to which to go when one sought God. There, as he stood in admiration and worship, his imagination was caught by the smoke wreaths from the altar as the incense filled the temple and floated out in the sunlight. He tells us that he saw the Lord high and lifted up in a shimmer of glory that filled the temple. He heard the chant of cherubim: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

"Ah, there was One far greater than the dead king. One whose glory filled the whole earth. Here was Israel's hope. But as he gazed and thought, a dreadful misgiving seized him. Was his nation fit to own such a King? Was he fit to reveal such a King to his nation? A feeling of his own sinfulness took hold of him. He realized that the whole nation was guilty of wrongs which were an insult to the righteousness of God. Some one must tell them; some one must warn them. Here was his life-work; God was calling him to it. But how could he with sin of his own, as he saw, become God's messenger? Then it seemed as if one came with a live coal from the altar and touched his lips and made them clean for this noble work. It burned out of his heart all selfishness and love of ease and every wrong desire. It made him feel that God forgave the past and opened up a new way of life—a fresh beginning. From that moment he found his work; he would be God's prophet."

The Work of a Prophet. Most of us, if we were asked to tell what a prophet is, would say that a prophet is a man who can look in some marvelous way into the future and tell how things are going to be hundreds of years before they come to pass. But that is not what a prophet really means. Some of the prophets did fortell the future, but some of them did not; and whether they did or not, made no real difference in their being prophets. The thing which made a man

a prophet was not the time he was talking about, but the One he was talking for. The prophets were men who spoke for God. They looked at the world as it was, and sometimes they looked ahead at the world as they believed it was going to be, and they told people what God's plan for it was. God's spirit had taught their hearts what God thought and what God wanted, and they carried that message to everybody who would listen. That was what made them prophets. —W. Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

When your Vision of God Comes. Every one of us can have things happen to him just as important as that which happened to Isaiah that day in the temple. All of a sudden we see things we never saw before. We may have gone along doing certain things and following certain habits which we never thought much about and just picked up because they happened to be easy, or because somebody else influenced us. And then some day when we are in the midst of the old, familiar surroundings, all at once we see them in a new light. We wake up to understand that the habit we have been slipping into thoughtlessly is making us less manly, less self-controlled, less like the men God's Spirit would make us be. We realize of a sudden the chances we are letting slip to make our lives strong and sweet, and to make the big life we share with other men and boys stronger and sweeter because we have touched it.

The awakening may come in church; it may come when we are talking with another boy we admire; it may come when we are off by ourselves and something makes us think straighter than usual; it may come on the athletic field or in any other familiar every-day place where we see a fine action done or hear a brave, ringing word spoken and we wonder if we could have done that. No matter where the experience comes or what form it takes, if it makes us see that our life and all the life of our friends we share in might be finer and better than it is, if it gives us a glimpse of what a great, high, glorious thing it is to live the kind of life that God holds up before every right-souled boy and man, then we have had our vision of God just as Isaiah had his long ago; and our souls have stood in the presence of God's splendor which will help us, if we will, to make our own lives splendid too.—W. Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

Every Christian Should be a Volunteer. You know the story of the Scots Guards, how at the time of a British War in West Africa they were drawn up in line at Windsor and asked by their colonel who among them would volunteer for the Ashantee expedition. He explained the call, and then requested those who would respond to step one pace forward. Then he turned away for a moment, and when he looked again he saw them all in an unbroken line, just as they had been before. "What!" he exclaimed, "the Scots Guards and no volunteers?" "Sir," said another officer, "the whole line stepped forward."

So should it be with all Christians. The call that reached Isaiah comes to every one: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and the answer that Isaiah made should be the answer of every one: "Here am I; send me." A Christian must be a volunteer. "Go work in my vineyard today." The vineyard is large. It includes the home, the school, the church, the Sunday-school, the young people's societies, the Home Missionary and the Foreign Missionary societies, the village, the city, the country, the whole world. Where have you been sent? In what department are you working?

Sentence Sermons.

Dreams grow holy put in action,
Work grows fair through starry dreaming,
But when each flows on unmingling
Both are fruitless and in vain.—A. A. Proctor.

Be mine some simpler service here below—
To weep with those who weep, their joys to share,
Their pain to solace, or their burdens bear;
To serve some child of thine, and to serve thee,
Lo here am I! To such work send me!—E. E. Hale.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the first two chapters of Amos. 2. What does the last part of verse 6 mean? 3. Who before the Israelites entered Canaan declared that the people were giants and they themselves were as grasshoppers in their sight? 4. What expression have we that indicates the complete destruction of anything? 5. Why is the drink traffic prohibited in our land?

AMOS DENOUNCES SIN
(WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

GOLDEN TEXT: Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Amos 5.14

LESSON Amos 2.4 to 3.15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15.1-5

AMOS 2.4 Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Judah, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah, and have not kept his statutes, and their lies have caused them to err, after which their fathers did walk. 5 But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

6 Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes—7 they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go unto the *same* maiden, to profane my holy name: 8 and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined.

9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. 10 Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. 11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith Jehovah. 12 But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JUDAH'S SINS AND THREATENED PUNISHMENT, verses 2-5. "Thus saith Jehovah," were the words with which Amos prefaced his denunciation of sin, for he rightly believed that he was the mouthpiece of a righteous God. "For three transgressions of Judah, yea, for four (the Hebrew way of saying, 'of accumulated transgressions'), I will not turn away the punishment thereof." Judah, the Southern Kingdom, had sinned over and over again; it was not any one evil act, but persistent, repeated evil acts that had called forth judgment. "Because they have rejected the law of Jehovah (the teaching of the prophets and priests) and have not kept his statutes (the definite, legal enactments), and their lies have caused them to err, after which their fathers did walk." "By 'lies' are meant the unreal, imaginary deities, the Baalim and Ashtaroths, who have no existence save in the minds of the worshiper, and therefore are sure to disappoint his hopes" (Dummelow).

"But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem." Judah would share the doom of the neighboring nations upon which the prophet had pronounced God's judgment in the earlier part of his address.

"He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully" (Jeremiah).

II. ISRAEL'S SINS AND THREATENED PUNISHMENT, verses 6-12. At the time when Amos uttered these words Northern Israel was at the height of its prosperity, wealth and luxury were more general than ever before, there was nothing to indicate to the mass of the people what Amos saw—its impending downfall. See page 22 of our Introduction. Amos charged Israel with avarice and oppression, immorality and sacrilege, and for such iniquity judgment would be meted upon them.

"Because they have sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes," asserted the prophet. "Apparently, rich creditors were unable to make use of all those whom they seized for debt and consequently they farmed them out to others. There is no essential difference between peonage of that sort and slavery" (J. M. Powis Smith). The purchasing value of "a pair of shoes" seems to have been a proverbial expression (Amos 8.6), indicating a trifling sum. See Light from Oriental Life.

"They that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor (a forcible, exaggerated expression), and turn aside the way of the meek." "They begrudge the very dust, a sign of mourning which a poor man has sprinkled on his head: they hinder the man who is in a lowly position from attaining his modest purpose." All these sentences show the downright heathenness and inhumanity of their treatment of the poor.

"How shall we explain our Master's interest in economic conditions? We might not have expected it from him. He did not rate financial affluence high. 'Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth'—that was his emphasis. We might say that he was a Teacher with no economic emphasis. Upon the contrary, when he saw folk depressed and hurt by greed and niggardliness, his interest and sometimes his indignation flamed. Victims left unhelped by the roadside, the poor lying untended at rich men's gates, widows robbed of their houses by the rapacity of rulers—wherever he went he was concerned about and was trying to lift all sorts of burdens from depressed lives. And if he were to come into our present economic situation, while, to be sure, he would not be a program builder, a sponsor for economic systems, he would walk through our mills, mines and factories, would lay his hands on wounded personalities and say, 'Do you have to do that to men and women, to boys and girls, to make your money? I come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly' "

(Harry Emerson Fosdick).

"And a man and his father go unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name." "The religion of many of the nations of antiquity sanctioned unchastity, and even adopted it as part of the worship of the gods, but if Jehovah's worshipers are morally unclean they pollute his holy name" (Dummelow).

"And they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge." According to the law of Ex. 22.25; Dt. 24.12, a garment taken in pledge must be restored by nightfall, for the day garment was the covering of the poor at night, but the creditors of whom Amos writes made use of the garments themselves instead of restoring them. The One Volume Commentary suggests that possibly Amos wrote, "And they stretch out beside every altar clothes taken in pledge," meaning that they hung them up as a votive offering in honor of their god.

"And in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined." "That is to say, at their sacrificial banquets they drank wine obtained by unjust fines."

Amos next showed them their ingratitude by reminding them of what God had done for them. It was God who destroyed the Amorite before them ("Amorite" stands for all the inhabitants whom the invading Israelites found in Canaan), "whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks." Recall the report of the ten spies who declared that the people of the land were giants, and added, "and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Notwithstanding their strength, God had destroyed them *root and branch,* as we say: "his fruit from above and his roots from beneath" is the equivalent Hebrew expression.

And then Amos reminded the Israelites how God had rescued them from the Egyptian bondage and had cared for them for forty years in the wilderness that they might enter and possess the land of Canaan. And he had raised up prophets and Nazirites from among the sons of the people. Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Abijah, Elijah, and Micaiah were the best known prophets before Amos. Samson and Samuel were Nazirites, men set apart to the service of God by a special vow of self-control, austerities and renunciations (Num. 6).

"Is it not ever thus, O ye children of Israel? saith Jehovah." Yet they had basely tempted the Nazirites to break their vows and drink wine, and had silenced the prophets.

"Amos would have been no true prophet if he had not clearly seen that because right was right, and because God was God, such a state of things could not last. How often has the state of affairs in guilty nations resembled that in the days of Amos!"

"Persia had never seemed to occupy a more sovereign position than when, in B. C. 388, her king, Artaxerxes II, commandingly dictated the Peace of Antalcidas; yet this was within sixty years of the day when she fell before the armies of Macedon. In 1587 Philip II seemed the undisputed autocrat of two hemispheres, and the New World was pouring into his treasuries its rivers of gold; yet the next year the defeat of his Invincible Armada by the audacious caravels of England began the dissolution which made Spain go to pieces like one of her own unwieldy galleons in a stormy sea. In 1667 Louis XIV seemed to be the one *Grand Monarque* of the world, and burnt the bills in his palace at Versailles lest their immense

amounts should witness fatally to his pomp and extravagance; but in the days of his successor, when men famished at the very gates of that gilded palace, the *Ancien Régime* received its death-blow, and the fearful outburst of the Revolution hurled the grandson of his successor upon the guillotine.

"Had there been prophets in the days of Artaxerxes II and Boniface VIII and Philip II and Louis XIV, they would have spoken to guilty kings and luxurious courtiers in such words as Amos addressed to the most powerful monarch of the House of Jehu" (F. W. Farrar).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They sell the needy for a pair of shoes, verse 6. An ordinary sandal is a thing of trifling value, and a pair of ordinary red morocco shoes can be bought for as low a sum as two shillings. For this miserable piece the transgressors in Israel betrayed the helpless.—James Neil, in Everyday Life in the Holy Land.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When had Canaan been divided into two kingdoms? What brought this about? When did Elijah champion the cause of social justice? In whose reign did Amos live? How had he received his call to be a prophet?

The Prophet Amos and his Times. Read pages 21, 22 of our Introduction.

The Background of the Second Chapter of Amos. In chapter 1 Amos dwells upon the judgments that are about to overtake the surrounding nations. Was he hoping thus to prepare the people of Israel to see in themselves the same sins that he denounced in six other nations and then in Judah, and to realize that they must meet the same judgment if they did not reform? They listened with warm approval to the pronouncement of doom upon Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab, but when he unexpectedly said, "Thou art the man," when he denounced the vice and wickedness of Judah and Israel and proclaimed the certainty of God's punishment of his own people, they heard him with amazement, incredulity, anger.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What a pity to give even the brief period devoted to the Sunday-school lesson on Temperance Sunday to the empty platitudes that mean so little to the youth of today. Why not begin to give them something worth while? Tell them of conditions that held under the license system. We seem to forget that most of them have never seen a saloon to remember what it was in its prime. We let them fill their minds with the stuff that unsympathetic newspapers enjoy publishing, until they come along and stand up in our young people's societies and repeat it, telling us with all their youthful knowledge that "conditions are much worse than before prohibition."

I have seen young people who for the first time saw a motion-picture portrayal of the actual conditions that existed before the outlawing of the liquor traffic turn to their pastor and say, "I never knew it was like that."

As for our day schools, did you know that some States have repealed the law compelling the teaching of the effect of alcohol upon the human system? Did you know that others are sliding into a nullification of the law concerning such instruction? Even the teaching as it was, poor enough according to the standards of today, was better than nothing. What would be wrong, for instance, with an extension of that teaching to include it in the department of physical education and domestic science as well as physiology and hygiene? But no, we are content with things as they are. Where is it all leading us? We sowed temperance education twenty-five years ago; we reaped prohibition. We sow nothing today; what can we expect to reap?—Frederick W. Smith, in Zion's Herald.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

INTEMPERANCE AND ASSOCIATED EVILS

Beginning the Lesson. The prophet Amos resembles John the Baptist. "He made his approach to the problems of his day by the direct route," as Dr. C. R. Brown so aptly says. "He was not clothed in soft raiment—he came, like his

successor in the time of Christ, rough in dress and rude in manner. He was emphatically an outdoor man with the smell of the soil in his garments and the accents of farm life in his rugged speech. He was one of those homely, weather-beaten people who make potent appeal to us all. The word of the Lord as it fell from his lips was a word with the bark on it. He was not a Matthew Arnold discoursing about "sweetness and light," with a polite scorn for the ways of the unwashed. He was a Thomas Carlyle, with a bite in his tongue and a hot hatred in his heart for all manner of sham. He was no reed shaken with the wind—he was built out of quartered oak."

What evils did he denounce in Israel?

What the Salvation Army Knows. Enemies of the Volstead Act waste their time when they try to tell organizations like the Salvation Army that national prohibition will not work, or that it is impractical and more vicious than the effect of unbridled public drinking. As a matter of fact, vast changes have come about since prohibition, and to undo them would be to strike a blow at every fireside and every industry in this country.

Why try to tell the Salvation Army that the park benches are crowded with drunken men as they were before prohibition? The benches are still there, but the occupants are not drunk any more but are climbing up to better things while the public rushes by all unheeding. Why try to tell us that workingmen spend their wages before their families can get the money for food, and that men beat their wives and children as in the old days? It simply is not the case.

It is true that the work of organizations for human betterment and for the alleviation of suffering everywhere, goes on apace, but it is not because of any liquor issue. Prohibition released us from the saloon harvest of wreckage so that we could redouble our efforts on other problems. Orphans and door-step babies still abound; young women, thrown against the world unfairly, still require help; old men and women still reach the day when they cannot work and we must sustain them; but the cash balances in your savings banks, the percentage of families that are now owning their own cottages, the crowded condition of our public and private schools, and even the fact that twenty million automobiles are propelled around the country today, all refute the statement of the drink advocate that crime has been increased because prohibition is here. With prohibition gone you would have a third less savings in the banks, half as many cozy and independent homes, one-fourth the radio sets and one-fourth the automobiles. The money tied up in these things came from the channel which hitherto led to the pockets of the brewers, distillers and grog-shop keepers.

If the liquor were to be given away free, instead of sold for a profit, the backers of the movement to modify or repeal the Volstead Act would disappear overnight. Enforcement hurts somebody's financial interests.—Evangeline Booth.

A Call to Friends of the Prohibition Law. It is daily more apparent that the Christian churches face the imminence of a battle for the preservation of the Prohibition Law. Congressional representatives of the liquor interests are becoming increasingly bold in their statements and activities; the country is flooded with vicious attacks upon the law, and the very elect are being deceived.

It is unfortunately and alarmingly true that the opponents of the prohibition policy have almost complete control of the great metropolitan centers of population. These cities house the wealth of the land. They control the avenues of information. They offer not only the serious expressions of opinions which affect the thoughtful and informed. A vast mass of propaganda against the law pours into the "provinces" concealed in alleged humor, syndicated to newspapers which are editorially dry; hidden in the dialogue of comic strips; in the words of popular songs; in the patter of stage comedians; in the words of fictional heroes. It is a propaganda of suggestion which by its drip, drip wears away the stone of conviction, and by imperceptible pulls and pushes shapes the opinions of adolescence and of uninstructed maturity.

The purpose of this effort is not by orderly processes to accomplish the repeal of legislation placed in the Constitution according to methods determined for us by our fathers. The opponents of the law well know the impossibility of winning the large majority of support which is as necessary for repeal as it was for adoption. Rather are they attempting by their sneers and jeers and misrepresentation to incite the light-minded to violation of the law, to create an unfavorable psychology toward its observance, to indicate that friendship for it or even failure to violate it is nonconformity, to stabilize a condition of nullification and have that nullification sanc-

tioned by a legal fiction contravening the purpose and spirit of the Constitutional Amendment.

"Treason," cried Victor Hugo, "must be seized red-handed. Beware of that calamity called an accomplished fact! To arms!"

The position of the church cannot change. The only proper attitude of Christians toward the liquor traffic is one of uncompromising opposition. That traffic, whether dealing in whisky, beer or wine, and no matter what its form, "is so pernicious in all its bearings, so inimical to the interests of honest trade, so repugnant to the moral sense, so injurious to the homes, to the church and to the body politic, and so utterly antagonistic to all that is precious in life, that the only proper attitude toward it for Christians is that of relentless hostility. It can never be legalized without sin. No temporary device for regulating it can become a substitute for prohibition. License, high or low, is vicious in principle and powerless as a remedy."

Are we as a church meeting our full obligation in this emergency? Have we perhaps talked too much of law enforcement, but too little of law observance?

The false charge brought against Socrates was that he had corrupted the youth. American youth are being corrupted. Are we intervening effectively in their behalf? When they are exhorted to look upon law defiance as a sport, can we safely neglect an appeal to their warm hearts and shifting opinions?

The problems of public morals were never more numerous than now. An appalling responsibility is indicated by the fact that many great evils are hardly being opposed at all. Race gambling has enormously increased since the war, and that in many places where the text of the law is against it. Prize-fighting, once practically banished, flourishes as a pestilence today. Salacious literature menaces our youth throughout the land, although effective work to curb this evil has been done during the past year. Theatrical exhibitions characterized by obscenity, nudity, profanity and blasphemy, and teachings contrary to public morals and policy are frequent.

In the words of a fighting prophet of old, "Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses."—Condensed from a Message to the Church from the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Be not Deceived; God is not Mocked. We are told that in Japan there is a traffic in rice seed said to possess magical properties. Whatever crop you wish to grow, this seed will produce it. Only sow the rice and pray. There will arise barley, wheat, maize, watermelons, according to your heart's desire. So we popularly cheat ourselves into the belief that by some magic things will eventually turn out satisfactorily, no matter how we live and act.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. We cannot sow to the flesh; sow covetousness, insobriety, dishonor, and realize the fruits of Paradise.—W. L. Watkinson.

What One Bible Class Accomplished. "Now, then," said the pastor to his newly-formed Bible class, "we have fifty-five members; we have a constitution and by-laws and a dozen committees. We are organized to do Christian work in this community. I should like to hear from each of you what you understand by that."

Different members gave different answers. Most of the replies were vague and indefinite.

"Suppose we outline our working program like this," said the pastor. "We are a Christian Brotherhood organized to do the 'impossible':

"1. To drive the saloon out of the town.

"2. To get rid of vice.

"3. To get indifferent men to go to church.

"4. To convince every one of the wickedness of selfishness and greed.

"5. To teach purity to the boys and girls.

"6. To convert Old Man Lowe."

At the last item the Brotherhood looked at one another aghast. "Old Man Lowe" was the worst drunkard and gambler in town; every one thought him an abandoned reprobate.

One by one, the members of the Brotherhood went in turn to "Old Man Lowe," and pleaded with him. After twelve men had been to see him on successive days, the old man's heart melted. He was a saved man—almost swept into the Kingdom of Heaven by sheer amazement, that these busy merchants and professional men should think enough of him to come and talk with him about the welfare of his soul. He himself had almost forgotten that he had one.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Social injustices of today. "It is the business of the church to create public opinion in which it shall be difficult or impossible for men to grow rich by making others poor" (W. H. P. Faunce).

2. National accountability.

3. The elimination of politics, inefficiency and graft from the enforcement of the Volstead Law.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why does the prophet declare Israel already fallen? 2. What does verse 13 mean? 3. What sins does Amos point out in this lesson? 4. What remedy does he propose? 5. When did Jesus face the problem of the exploitation of the poor, and what did he do about it? (Mt. 21.12, 13.) 6. What sin denounced in our lesson is rampant in our land? 7. What other national sins have we which Amos would have denounced.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY THE DRINK TRAFFIC IS PROHIBITED

Beginning the Lesson. "Sometimes," says Dean Hodges in The Castle of Zion, "a caravan came by where Amos lived. The men of these caravans were traders who brought the spices of the East to sell in the markets of the South. The road lay beside the fields of Amos, and when they stopped to give their camels drink from the well at which he watered the sheep, he talked with them. They told him what was going on in Damascus and in Tyre; they described what they had seen in Israel and in Judah; they brought him the gossip of the nations. After they were gone he thought about these things for days.

"Sometimes he took the wool of his sheep, and went into cities to sell it. And he looked about him, noticing what buildings were there, and how the people dressed and behaved themselves. He observed the rich and the poor. He visited and watched the priests. Then he came home to his sheep, and thought about what he had seen and heard. He hated the rich merchants, who lived in splendid houses of hewn stone, and lay upon soft cushions on beds of ivory, and were entertained by skilful players on instruments of music, and drank wine out of bowls, selling goods out of measures which were too small and in scales whose weights were too light, making men work long hours for little pay, charging high prices, afflicting the souls of the poor. He hated the priests, who busied themselves with beautiful services, and let this wickedness go on without a protest.

"As Amos thought upon these things, he said to himself, God cannot bless any nation which disobeys his laws. Wickedness shall certainly be punished. These great cities shall certainly be destroyed unless they repent, and change their ways.

"It seemed to Amos very dreadful that people should be going on toward such a fate with nobody doing anything to prevent it. He felt like one who sees a boat drifting down a river, and knows that beyond are rapids and then a steep fall, and that the people are bound to be drowned unless they turn about and row up stream or to the shore. At last, he heard the voice of God in his soul telling him 'to cry aloud and give a warning.'"

What sins of Judah did he denounce? What sins of Israel?

Some Reasons why the Drink Traffic is Prohibited. Alcohol as a beverage deceives. It looks innocent, but it is poison. It seems to put strength into one, but it takes strength from one. It seems to warm one, but it makes one colder. It seems to cheer one, but it makes one depressed. It is about the most deceptive thing there is.

It deflects. If you stood by a ship's compass and held a magnet against it you would draw or deflect the needle away from the north and make it point in some other direction. That is what drink does. A young man was a leader in his college and on the straight road to honors and a high position, but he began to drink and that turned him aside into the path of failure and shame.

It disables. To disable a man requires an illness or an accident? Oh, no, it doesn't. He must fall, or something must fall upon him? Oh, no, both can be quickly done by drink. Drink makes it impossible for a man to think, or speak or walk. It paralyzes brain and body. The drinker is incapable for the tasks of life.

It disfigures. If you care for a good appearance you will have nothing to do with alcohol. It paints the face with blotches and the nose with red; it takes the light

out of the eye and the nobleness out of the looks. One never saw a handsome drunkard.

It degrades. Alcohol degrades from wealth to poverty, from health to sickness, from happiness to misery. It lowers the drinker in his own eyes and in the eyes of others.

The Effect of One or Two Alcoholic Drinks. In the matter of our conduct—the things we say and do—we are constantly under self-restraint. Our own good judgment, common sense, conscience, or whatever you may call it, is constantly trying to keep us from doing or saying the foolish or evil thing. Science tells us that each phase of consciousness and activity is connected with some part of the brain. The influence of alcohol is directly upon the brain and nerve centers, and first upon these centers which have to do with our choice of action as between right and wrong. Often a man who is not drunk, but has had a drink or two, is more lively and glib-tongued than usual. Often he will do and say things for which he is afterwards very sorry. Why? Because as a result of taking even a small quantity of liquor, these restraints are weakened, self-criticism and self-control are not working with full efficiency. The brakes are slipping. The reason is this—alcohol is a narcotic. For a long time people thought it was a stimulant, and so they believed that a little of it would do a person good. Science now shows that it is never a stimulant, but always a narcotic. Its effect is to numb and deaden certain functions of the brain and nerves. That is why men and women under its influence are guilty of such foolish and often wicked conduct. The inhibition or restraints which a wise Creator has placed within us for the protection of our health and character, are interfered with and rendered inefficient.

No One Is really Safe when Moral Contagion Is about. A doctor of experience once said: "It is just as important to know what kind of patient the disease has got, as to know what kind of disease the patient has got." Certain patients are susceptible to certain classes of disease, or to all disease. They have little resisting power or vitality. It is important to shield them from all possible contagion. A very strong and healthy-looking man or woman often dies at the first onset of disease, as we all know.

In the spiritual realm, the same truth holds. There are certain classes of people who are easily tempted, easily overcome by sin, and not likely ever to get back to spiritual health or soundness. Some families have hereditary sins, attacking their members with peculiar fierceness of temptation. The whole human race, to begin with, is inclined to sin. No soul is really safe when moral contagion is about. Only when each individual realizes this—realizes what kind of patient he or she is, in relation to moral maladies—can danger be wisely met.

There is nothing more perilous than for a young man or woman to believe, mistakenly, that sin does not exist, and is not to be reckoned with personally. Sin is as real as, and far more dangerous than, cancer or smallpox. In many cases, it has special hereditary power. How foolish, then, not to turn from its very beginnings.

"Avoid it, pass not by it;
Turn from it, and pass away."

said the wisest of the ancients, in regard to evil. His advice holds just as good today.—Forward.

Sentence Sermons. The purpose of law is to make it as hard as possible to do wrong, and as easy as possible to do right.—Gladstone.

Oh what a generation that will be to which strong drink is unknown; how healthy, how wealthy, how clear of intellect; how strong of aim, and how rich in hope!—F. W. Farrar.

Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What sins are condemned in verse 11? 2. In verse 12? 3. What remedy did the prophet propose? 4. Would that remedy be the right one today?

AMOS PLEADS FOR JUSTICE

GOLDEN TEXT: Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Amos 5.24

LESSON Amos, Chapters 5 and 7 **DEVOTIONAL READING** Proverbs 21.1-7

AMOS 5.1 Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel. 2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up.

10 They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. 11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, and ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. 12 For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate *from their right.*

13 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. 15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

21 I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. 23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. 24 But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A LAMENT OVER ISRAEL, verses 1-3. "Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel." A "lamentation" is a technical term applied to poetry of a mournful tone, a dirge such as was chanted over the dead, as in David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan (2 S. 1.17), or in the face of any calamity, such as Ezekiel uttered in Ezekiel 19. This lamentation in Amos has "the proper form of elegiac poetry in Hebrew, being composed of poetical verses in each of which a long line is followed by a short one."

Amos has been called "the first Doomster of Israel." "The virgin of Israel is fallen," he cried, "she shall no more rise; she is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up." "The point of the figure, the virgin of Israel, is probably in that it represents Israel as free and untrammeled by the yoke of any foreign nation" (John Merlin Powis Smith). So sure is the prophet of her fall that he speaks as if it were already accomplished, and her condition were hopeless. " 'How is it possible,' said the people, 'that the virgin daughter of Israel can be fallen, when everybody is rich; or that the kingdom can be undermined, when the nation is prosperous? Is it not a nation's function to develop trade? Are not empires constructed for the purpose of increasing foreign commerce, and developing the home market? And now that trade with our great foreign markets and in our home market is at its height, this prophet comes and tells us that Israel is fallen, she can rise no more!' His countrymen judged by externals; Amos judged by principles. Amos saw and understood causes; the people recognized only results. Amos saw injustice and inequity practised and he reasoned thus: 'God is a God of justice. It is his will that justice should be done. Sooner or later God's will will be done, and our people must suffer.' Although he spoke many decades before the destruction of Samaria, the consequences, which he saw, came to pass. The virgin of Israel did fall, and she has risen no more" (Rabbi Levy).

His prophecy was fulfilled, Zechariah, the son and successor of Jeroboam II, was murdered after a reign of only six months; his successor, Shallum, reigned one month; Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea had brief reigns, and then, in 722 B. C., Samaria was conquered by Assyria, and the people carried off into exile.

"Wrongdoers escape punishment too often. Human justice, being human, is far from being perfect. And yet there are more persons who do not escape man's punishment than who do. It may be delayed, but it comes to them finally in one form or another. But suppose they do escape man's punishment; what of facing their own conscience, as David was forced to do? And if they escape that, what of facing their sins and weaknesses in their children? There is no escape. I know there often seems to be, but sometime, in some form we all have to face our sins."

II. DENUNCIATION OF INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION, verses 10-13. "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. The "gate" refers to the broad, open space before a city gate where claims were adjusted; compare Dt. 22.15; Ruth 4.1; 1 K. 22.10.

Amos had the common experience of men who speak disagreeable truths. There were doubtless those in Israel who looked upon his fierce denunciations of the social evils as the signs of a treasonable spirit. The descendants of Amos in our day are always accused of giving their city or country a bad name when they call attention to glaring social faults" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat." The prophet is here addressing the judges of whom the poor had to buy justice by giving them a share of their scanty harvest of wheat. "Ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof."

Recall the observation of Lamartine that man never fastened one end of a chain around the neck of his brother, that God did not fasten the other around the neck of the oppressor.

"For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right." The bribe was accepted from the rich who then escaped the penalty due; from the needy, who could not pay a bribe, his rights were withheld.

One of Abbey's mural decorations in the Pennsylvania State Capitol is the figure of Justice. Across the background is this quotation: "Justice is the end of government; it is the end of civil society; it ever has been, ever will be, pursued until it be obtained, or until librty be lost in the pursuit."

"Therefore he that is prudent—cautious—shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time." The evil justices were in power, and it was useless for others, so they thought, to attempt to change things, they would only get themselves into trouble in such a time as has just been described.

"One of the worst features of such a state of society as Amos saw is that men are afraid to speak out in condemnation of it, and the ill weeds grow apace for want of a scythe. The man who is over-careful of his skin or his reputation will hold his tongue; even good men may become so accustomed to the glaring corruptions of society in the midst of which they have always lived, that they do not feel any call to rebuke or wage war against them; but the brave man, the man who takes his ideals from Christ, and judges society by its conformity with Christ's standard, will not keep silence, and the more he feels that it is an evil time, the more he feels that he cannot but speak out, whatever comes of his protest. What masquerades as prudence is very often sinful cowardice" (Alexander Maclaren).

III. THE WAY OF ESCAPE, verses 14, 15. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you in reality, as now you vainly say he is with you. They were vainly imaging that Jehovah was with them because they were enjoying material prosperity, as Amos's words elsewhere show. "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph," unto the small fraction of the people who will escape. Professor Kent paraphrases these verses thus: "To whomsoever my words appeal, I repeat; persevere in your efforts to do that which is right in the sight of God, and he, the all-powerful and just, will not fail you. Undauntedly strive to put down public evil, and to purify the law courts; perchance a faithful few may yet survive the approaching destruction to enjoy Jehovah's blessings and favor."

IV. JUSTICE, NOT MERE RITUAL, PLEASING TO GOD, verses 21-24. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies," the prophet represents God as saying.

"Our solemn assemblies may still be despised by God. Whenever mere ritual and form are allowed to take the place of filial communion with God and moral obedience, our worship will be as lightly esteemed by him as was the worship of Israel long ago, and our sanctuaries will fall, as did the ancient

high places. Our churches will be empty, their services despised, and the heart and mind of man will turn for sustenance elsewhere" (W. J. Farley).

"Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts." The burnt-offerings were the most costly sacrifices; the meal-offerings were of flour, or of flour mingled with oil and incense; a part of the peace-offerings was eaten by the worshipers.

"Take thou away from me the noise of thy sayings; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." "Vocal and instrumental music was employed in the temple service at Bethel, but was utterly distasteful to God because of the unrighteousness of the singers and the people generally: compare Isa. 1.13; Ezek. 26.13" (Dummelow). The viols were a kind of lute or guitar, with ten or twelve strings and a sounding board.

"Nothing can be accomplished unless, first of all, both servant and master are resolved that, come what will of it, they will do each other justice. This is the one thing constantly reiterated by our Master—the order of all others that is given oftenest—'Do justice and judgment.' That's your Bible order; that's the 'Service of God,' not praying nor psalm-singing" (Ruskin).

"But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

"These are immortal words; they express in imperishable form the essence of religion, the simple demands of God upon men. The justice, the righteousness for which Amos here pleads, is a social thing; it is tender regard for the poor, hatred of the evil conditions that have devastated their lives; it is the spirit which yearns and works for the removal of those conditions; it is, in a word, respect for personality, fair play as between man and man. Let justice, in that sense, run through society, unimpeded by avarice or selfishness or cruelty, let it roll on without let or hindrance like the waves of the sea; let it roll on unintermittently, all the year round, whatever be the political weather; let it roll on 'like a perennial stream,' which even in the fiercest heat of summer never dries up. That is the true service of God" (J. E. McFadyen).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Ye trample upon the poor, verse 11. The rich have long trampled upon the poor in Palestine. The legal rate of interest upon money loaned has been in the past nine per cent, but a resident of the land says that it has been by no means unknown for the rich to charge as much as thirty, and it was possible to manipulate matters and make the rate of interest a hundred per cent, as in Amos 3.10.

Ye that take a bribe, verse 12. The law reads: Thou shalt take no bribe, for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous, Ex. 23.8. The word translated *bribe* means primarily a present, such presents as have always been taken in oriental lands to a superior. Professor McCurdy tells us that in the correspondence of the El Amarna tablets the business is seen to be quite overdone, while the annals of the Assyrian kings fairly swarm with instances. It was, therefore, a natural thing to send a present to a judge before a case came up for hearing; though publicity was not desirable (Prov. 21.14) and was usually avoided, as a suggestive proverb informs us, Prov. 17.23. And he remarks about the present custom that to a casual observer of oriental life the prevailing official corruption is something appalling.

Let justice roll down as waters, verse 24. The home of Amos was on the edge of the desert. He knew the value and the necessity of water. No more appealing picture could be brought to the Palestinian than the flow of water—a perennial spring. This means life, health, joy.—Charles Arthur Hadley.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What sons of a judge took bribes? What king took away from another his possessions? What did Amos say in our last lesson about the oppression of the poor in Israel?

The Message of the Book of Amos. Read the book through, then read pages 22, 23 of our Introduction.

The Background of our Lesson. Chapter IV of Amos ends with a vision of Jehovah coming to avenge himself upon his guilty people: "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and created the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name." Then Chapter V begins with a lament over Israel, for the prophet is transported in imagination to the days that are to follow Israel's downfall.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Most church-goers leave God in the church, it has been said. "Who names his name in the rush of business or in the tumult of pleasure? How many of us connect the thought of him with any absorbing interest of our lives? God is removed farther and farther from common daylight and common dust and toil and common tears and laughter into the shadow of shrines and the dim odor of sanctuaries, until we have taken him from all contact with our real lives, where everything must dwell that is to touch us with any vital power."

To counteract this tendency of modern life we could have no better text for study than this from the prophet Amos. Religion is not in ritual, not in church services merely, religion has to do with our daily living, with all of life.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CONDITIONS OF DIVINE APPROVAL

Beginning the Lesson. Our department topic today is The Conditions of Divine Approval. Amos has much to say about this—his whole book (after the first chapter) is an arraignment of Israel for failing to live so as to meet the approval of God. Of what did he accuse the people in our last lesson? What are his accusations in this lesson? "Would you win God's approval? Then let your every act be governed by the laws of justice," is, in brief, the answer of Amos.

There Must Be Economic Justice to Meet the Divine Approval. When we make a purchase of any kind we generally consider simply the quality of the goods and the price that we can afford to pay; but there is something more involved than simply satisfying a desire or getting our money's worth. The consumer also is partner in the social process of business. He becomes an agent of social well-being or misery by the way in which he demands goods at certain prices, or articles, the very making of which puts the lives of his comrades in danger. What right have we to purchase goods, even at the Monday bargain counter, when their production must have involved the disadvantage of an unknown comrade? This is a pertinent question, and it cannot be lightly dismissed.

The selfish and greedy elements in trade ought to be exposed fearlessly and vividly. Like a voracious monster, trade would swallow up the poor. It must be held in check by the Golden Rule of Christ. The modern manufacturer is sometimes externally pious, keeping all the holy days and observing the religious ceremonies, hoping only that these will not interfere too seriously with his habitual secular task of plundering the poor. There is a tendency in trade to deal in false weights and dishonest measures. It profiteers to the limit. It puts on every commodity "all that the traffic will bear." It practises adulteration of food and does not scruple to sell poisonous products for a price. This is the tendency. The modern regulation of commerce by government is sufficient proof of this fact. The offense becomes more reprehensible when it is indulged by so-called Christian men.

Therefore we maintain the Christian law of business. "Hear this," says the prophet. God is just. God commands and commends honorable dealing. God cannot be satisfied with forms of worship carried out by men whose hearts are filled with greed and the lust for gain. God demands scrupulous honesty and repentance for all cheating and lying in the commercial world. Economic justice is therefore the finest test of true religion. This law must be constantly upheld and defended in the pulpit.—Condensed from Preaching the Social Gospel, by Ozora H. Davis.

What Justice Involves. It is of the first importance that we should see what is involved in the idea of justice. As there are masterpieces of literature, like Milton's Paradise Lost, which all agree to praise, but which few read, so there are virtues which all applaud but few examine. Justice is one of them. Men may differ about

loving every one, but they agree concerning the duty of being just to every one. Yet the unappreciated depth and height and breadth of this applauded virtue is at once suggested by the fact that its most succinct, complete description is the Golden Rule. Consider what large matters are involved in that!

The keeping of the Golden Rule is quite impossible without the use of generous and sympathetic imagination. No man can do to another what he wishes another to do to him, unless he has the gracious power to put himself in another's place.

Moreover, to do to others what we wish them to do to us involves not only sympathy, but active good will. To do for others what we desire to have done for us is not a negative ideal. Too often justice is pictured in terms of abstinence from rank injustice. Not to be cruel, not to oppress the poor nor to crush the faces of the needy, that is to be just. But the Golden Rule cannot so negatively be kept. Justice is positive. It means the painstaking bestowal upon other lives of the same sort of constant, sacrificial ministry by which we ourselves have lived and without which we could not really live at all.

Father Damien goes out to the lepers because he knows that if he were a leper he would not wish to be left in helpless, unbefriended isolation, unrelieved by any touch of human kindliness. Florence Nightingale goes out to the Crimea because she knows that if she were a wounded soldier brought in from the battlefield, she would not want to toss in pain unnursed by a woman's gentleness. Pioneers blaze the trail of medical missions, because they know that if means of healing were anywhere available, they would not wish to lie in needless pain or see their loved ones die in agony amid the rattle of witch doctors' drums. If once the Golden Rule were seriously taken, if men in earnest put themselves in the place of all oppressed, benighted folk, unbefriended, and cheated of their share in civilization's gains, and if in earnest they set themselves to do for them what they themselves in similar case would need, there would come a world-wide transformation of social life.

Justice says: you are a white man. Then put yourself in the place of the Negro, whose father was freed when he was a youth, and whose great-great-great-grandfather was brought over against his will on a slave-ship from Africa, and see from the inside, how the problem of that man's life must appear to him. You are an American. Put yourself in the place of Britain, and France, and Italy, and Japan, and China, and those who but lately were our enemies, to see how this tangled world's problem must appear to them! You are a laboring man. Put yourself in the place of the employer, and see from his angle the perplexing problem of our economic life. You are an employer. Then put yourself in the place of the laboring man, to see how his life must appear to him.

Justice is not less exacting than emotional affection, but more. It applies in realms where affection does not move. It holds a man to understanding sympathy and generous good-will toward people whom instinctively he may dislike. At last it leads him to attack the organized injustice of our social and economic order, not because he himself is hurt, but because others are oppressed, in whose place he has imagined himself to be.—Condensed from The Meaning of Service, by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Trampling on the Poor. When I see the way some poor families in New York have to live, with such conditions of ill health and misery as few people dream; when I walk the city streets thinking of innumerable boys who will never know any other playground than the streets afford; or go into homes where little children who ought to be asleep work until midnight making paper flowers; when I watch the terrific incidence of the city's industry upon multitudes of workers, or see the tragedy of the whole world reflected on the faces that come up from Ellis Island, hoping against hope to find here a paradise; and when I think of the thousands in the city who live careless, useless, futile, frittered lives, with time for business, dress, bridge, golf, dancing, theater, and automobile, but who never sacrificially think of their brothers living in an earthly hell or of children robbed of childhood's heritage, I sometimes wonder how God Almighty in his infinite patience lets our miserable lives go on.—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Bribery. Representative government, democracy, the social order itself, stand in no greater danger than that threatened by the bribe-giver and the bribe-taker.

When bills are passed or defeated for money secretly paid in hand, when justice is sold and law made an article of shameless traffic, the foundations of government and order are undermined.

More, not less, respect for law is what Americans need. Less, not more, is what they will have if the dishonest legislator and the bribing man of business have their way.

Men holding positions of trust in financial and business life have been found buying favors, buying contracts, buying favorable legislation, buying immunity from "strike bills." It is a sickening sight.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The prophet Amos and his book. See pages 21-23 of our Introduction.

2. The social ideals of the churches. A pamphlet with this title may be obtained from the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 105 East 22nd St., New York.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire Book of Hosea. 2. In what century did Hosea live? 3. What is known about Hosea, and what was the purpose of his writing? 4. Define backsliding. 5. What were Admah and Zeboiim, and what does the reference to them mean? 6. Did Israel respond to Hosea's appeal?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A SQUARE DEAL FOR GOD

Beginning the Lesson. It is an unexpected title which our Lesson Committee has given us today: what is it? What is your definition of a square deal? What did Amos say the Israelites were offering God? Amos did not object to burnt-offerings and meal-offerings and peace offerings in and of themselves, he would not object to their sacrificial beasts, their ritual and their singing, if they had been accompanied by righteous deeds. But they were not. Injustice and other evils were rampant. Of what did Amos accuse the Israelites? What did he urge them to do?

What Doth Jehovah Require of Thee, but to Do Justly? He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. Aristides had such a reputation for integrity and justice at Athens that when Themistocles told the Athenians he had a plan which would greatly benefit the city, only it must not be made public, they directed him to tell it to Aristides and they would abide by his decision. The plan was to seize the ships of the other Greeks and make themselves masters of the sea. "Nothing could be more profitable, but nothing more unjust, than the measure proposed by Themistocles," was Aristides's report, and the Athenians promptly rejected the plan without knowing what it was.

During the Civil War a private soldier knocked down his captain and was sentenced to the Dry Tortugas, a group of coral keys in the Gulf of Mexico where a penal settlement had been established. His friends induced Judge Scholfield to intercede for him with President Lincoln. The President listened to the Judge's pleas, and then spoke: "I tell you, Judge, you go right down to the Capitol, and get Congress to pass an act authorizing a private soldier to knock down his captain. Then come back here, and I will pardon your man." Judge Scholfield did not argue the question further.

Trampling on the Poor. "Five dollars! Gertrude, I never heard of such a thing! Any dressmaker I know would have charged twenty, at least."

"That's what I told you. Isn't she a find? It isn't just the work, you know—she has ideas. Look at those sleeves—aren't they the daintiest things you ever saw? Of course she is overrun with work, but if you tell her that you are a friend of mine she'll find time for you somehow."

"I surely will try," Frances Mallory replied, absently. She was still studying the lovely chiffon gown on the bed. She knew exactly the amount of work in all the dainty trimming. "I couldn't afford twenty," she said, slowly, "and I should tell her so frankly, but I could pay ten."

"But, Frances, you never would! You couldn't!" exclaimed Gertrude. "Don't you see it's a point of honor? I would like to pay her more, of course, but if I did she would raise her prices, and the girls who told me about her would all be down on me—and they'd have a right to be. She must be getting along all right, or she'd ask more herself. She's getting lots more to do than she had in the country—"

"So she came from the country—that explains it. I'm afraid I'll have to keep on with Miss Bridges, dear. Don't think me ungrateful. This woman does much

prettier work, and I'd love to have her, but I couldn't take advantage of her ignorance; I should feel like a robber every time I wore the gown. You see I know the work in it—you don't."

"I know that you are an absolute fanatic about some things, Frances Mallory!" Gertrude cried, hotly. "You'd better go! I'm cross!"

Frances went at once. Gertrude's "crossness" did not trouble her—it would evaporate in an hour; but the problem did. Was she foolish? Had she a right to profit by another's ignorance? Was it possible, after all, that the little dressmaker "got along all right"?

The little dressmaker herself, at that moment, sat in a room heaped with work, and wearily pushed her hair back from her hot forehead. "You ought to stop, Lucy," her mother said, anxiously. Lucy shook her head. She knew to a penny the amount of the week's bills, and the number of hours of work it took to meet them. "You ought to ask more," her mother fretted, "such work as you do—" Lucy looked up, terror in her tired eyes, "O mother—suppose they should leave me? I'd never dare!"

If Gertrude could have heard, would it have made any difference?—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

Not a Square Deal. The boys of the football team of the Glendale High School had finished their practice for the day, had had their bath and rub and were lounging for an hour, clothed and in their right mind, in the club room of the gym. The day's practice had gone successfully; they were feeling well and reasonably confident, and they sat and chatted for a little while before they went home. One of the boys picked up a magazine, on whose cover was the announcement of a featured article on religion by a well-known writer.

"I've read his stuff for a good while, and liked it," said Fred Moore, "but I did not know he had anything to say on that subject."

"A good many men who have not much to say about it have strong convictions on that subject," observed Coach Haskins.

The boys all knew that Haskins himself was that kind of man. He did not allow any profanity or unclean talk around the gym or on the field, and he was known to be a religious man, but he did not talk much about it. All the boys respected and admired him, for he was clean and square and manly, and he taught the boys to be brave and fair and to do teamwork, and his instruction secured results. There was a moment of silence after he spoke, and then Fred spoke again:

"A fellow can get along all right without religion when everything goes well, but he sure needs it when trouble comes."

None of the boys responded to this, but their silence was one that appeared to indicate a general acceptance of the idea. After a moment Coach Haskins spoke again:

"A good many people think that way, Fred, but I wonder if that's quite a fair division. I personally don't like the idea of fifty-fifty split on that basis. It does not seem to me a square deal to go to God with our troubles and to the devil for our fun."

"You don't mean that we ought not to have any fun except going to prayer meeting?" asked Fred.

"No, I do not mean that at all. I am only thinking that, if our religion is good for anything, it is as good for our sport as it is for our sorrow, and we ought to count our reasonable joys as much of interest to God as our misfortunes. I think if religion is good for any part of life it is good for the whole of it. Think it over, boys, and see if it is not so."

Sentence Sermons. As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.—Jesus.

"Help me
To be more true and good from day to day,
And just a bit more fair in some small way."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Name the Major Prophets. 2. The Minor. 3. Why are they called Minor? 4. What is meant by the expression, "When Israel was a child"? 5. For what does "Ephraim" stand? 6. What had befallen Admah and Zeboïim, as told in Dt. 29.23? 7. Who said, "God is love"? (1 Jn. 4.16.)

HOSEA PREACHES GOD'S LOVE

GOLDEN TEXT: I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. Hosea 6.6

LESSON Hosea, Chapters 6, 11, and 14 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 36.5-10

HOSEA 11.1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 The more *the prophets* called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. 3 Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. 4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them.

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath.

14.4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. 5 I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. 6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. 7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. 8 Ephraim *shall say,* What have I to do any more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him: I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL, 11.1-4. "When Israel was a child," in the beginning of its national existence, "then I loved him, and called my son out of the bondage in Egypt." "Called him, locally, into the land of Caanan, and morally, to set an example of true religion" (Cheyne). "Hosea dwells on that beautiful past, half in melancholy reflection on the contrast, and half in persuasive pleading that the old relations between the nation and their God may be restored. The early days in Egypt and the Desert were a history of grace on the part of God. The prophet stops in his message of doom to recall lovingly the early periods of Israel's national existence, and sees God's love claiming them, and meeting with fit response" (Black).

"The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." "What, then, was the good of the prophets? They kept up a church within the nation, and they developed ideas which bore fruit in due time" (Cheyne).

Hosea next compares God with a father who teaches his child to walk and carries it when wearied in his arms. But the child failed to recognize that it was Jehovah who healed him. Then the prophet changes the figure from that of a child being trained by a parent to that of oxen driven by a considerate master. "I drew them with cords of a man"—not with reins such as are used for beasts of burden—"with bands (collars) of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them." Oxen have no reins, but are guided by a long goad; the yoke is fixed over the brow near the horns, and thus comes down over the jaws. A considerate owner raises the yoke from the animal's cheeks that it may eat food more comfortably.

"How much more clearly should the Christian church see this than Hosea, after the greatest of all object lessons in Jesus Christ! The whole story throbs with human tenderness, with human sympathy with men in their joy and their sorrow, sympathy with a little child, and with all on whom the yoke pressed, the laboring and heavy laden. Can he fail to draw all men unto himself? With the cords of a man he is drawing men; in the bonds of love he is binding the world together. Who can resist the appeal?" (Hugh Black).

II. JEHOVAH CANNOT LIGHTLY ABANDON ISRAEL, 11.8, 9. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" Tenderness fills Hosea's heart, and he represents God as distracted between justice and mercy. "How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboiim?" I shall give thee over to destruction, as I did those cities of the plain which were destroyed in the overthrow of Sodom and

Gomorrah, Dt. 29.23. "My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together." He is completely overcome by his feelings. "Evidently there was a conflict in the prophet's own mind between the ideas of justice and love. Justice seemed to demand that all relations between Jehovah and Israel should be broken off; love remonstrated with the assurance of its undecayed healing faculty, 14.4. Both justice and love were dimmer; hence it seemed that there must be a conflict even in the mind of Jehovah" (Cheyne). "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim." "Hosea had very little to say about future events, and what he did say was not fulfilled in any literal sense. Israel never was restored to favor. Assyria brought her finally to the ground. God did not inspire Hosea to prophesy events. He sent events to inspire Hosea. In this respect Hosea represents all the Old Testament prophets and their writings. It was not so much the future as the present and the past that kindled the prophetic fire" (Newton Marshall).

"For I am God, and not man"—therefore more long-suffering and less revengeful than man—"and I will not come in wrath." Compare Ps. 130.4; Is. 55, 9.

"It is this element of hope which gives to the writings of the prophets their highest value, for it is a recognition of the eternal principle of the government of the world. And this golden close of the denunciations, this pointing to the resplendent arc of the rainbow of mercy amid the darkest bursts of storm, is the most marked characteristic not of Hosea only, but of Joel, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and all the greatest of the true prophets. They saw that in the nature of things there are irreconcilable antinomies—that is, laws apparently conflicting, apparently contradictory, which are equally true, thoroughly irreconcilable because their ultimate unity and reconciliation runs up into regions of infinitude beyond our feeble grasp" (F. W. Farrer).

III. THE PROPHET'S ENTREATY, 14.1-3. Hosea entreats the people of Israel to return to the Lord, and bids them offer this penitent prayer: "Take away all our iniquity and accept what in us is good; instead of burnt-offerings (bullocks) we offer thee our prayers (the offering of our lips). We will no longer trust in Assyria nor in Egypt, nor in idols, the work of our hands, but in thee alone, helper of the fatherless."

IV. ASSURANCE OF DIVINE MERCY AND LOVING-KINDNESS, 14.4-8 To this penitent prayer the Lord will respond: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." See Hosea 6.1; Isaiah 51.18. Hosea is very sure of the mercy and loving-kindness of God. If his rebellious countrymen will repent, they will be forgiven.

"As a mother bears with a wayward child, believing in something which, though she sees no sign of it, she hopes one day to see; as her love holds out in after days when it may be the years have failed to realize that good which she dreamed about her boy; as she still sees him in her mother's heart, not him the mistake or the shame, not him as he is, but him as he might have been, him in the light of her desire; as she still protests that her child is something more and something better than has ever appeared; as she never really gives him up as bad, as lost; or if she gave him up would in that hour cease to be his mother according to the spirit; so God our Father in Heaven abides us all, endures the awful disappointments of time in the hope that some day the sin, the madness, will pass out of our blood, and in the train of Jesus Christ we shall come home to God" (John A. Hutton).

"I will be as the dew unto Israel." See Light from Oriental Life. The dew is often used metaphorically for spiritual blessing.

Dew falls on vegetation and revives it and causes it to grow; but it does not fall on barren rocks, where it would be of no avail. The Lord is as the dew to human souls.

"He shall blossom as the lily." A growing soul is beautiful. "And cast forth his roots as Lebanon." A growing soul becomes strong. The great roots of the grand cedars of Lebanon strike deep into the earth, and the trees are strong enough to endure the storms of centuries. "The controlling feature of Galilee is her relation to the great Lebanon mountains. Galilee is literally the casting forth of the roots of Lebanon. As the supports of a great oak run up above ground, so the gradual hills of Galilee rise from Esdraelon and Jordan and the Phœnician coast, upon that

tremendous northern mountain. To her dependence on the Lebanons Galilee owes her water and her immense superiority in fruitfulness to both Judea and Samaria" (George Adam Smith).

"His branches shall spread." A growing soul is an expansive one. "And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree." Olive-trees have the beauty of usefulness as well as of good appearance; so has a growing soul. "And his smell as Lebanon." The cedars of Lebanon are fragrant; a growing soul has a refreshing savor.

"Yes, my soul, thou shalt grow and spread; thy very shadow shall yield revival and health; thou shalt be sweet to God as the very smell of the land to the husbandman; thy return to idols shall become impossible; and, as thou shalt abide with God, thou shalt bear much fruit. Such are God's dealings with souls that will walk in his right ways" (F. B. Meyer).

"They that dwell under his shadow shall return." Israel as a nation is represented as a tree under whose shade the individual Israelites dwell, whose return from exile is here prophesied. "It is better to correct the text slightly," J. M. P. Smith suggests, "and read: They shall again dwell under his shadow, i.e., the exiles shall be restored to their homes and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." "They shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

Could words better express how the divine power works in the human soul and causes it to blossom and bear fruit, growing in beauty and in usefulness? He who yields himself to the divine influence shall become pure in heart, "blossoming as the lily"; shall become deeply rooted in Christian character, "casting forth his roots as Lebanon"; shall expand in the knowledge and love of God, "his branches shall spread"; shall grow winsome, "his beauty shall be as the olive-tree and his smell as Lebanon"; shall become a blessing to others, "they that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the grain and blossom as the vine."

"Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" The question is equivalent to the negative statement, I have nothing to do with idols. The margin of the Revised Version gives another translation of the Hebrew: "O Ephraim, what have I to do any more with idols?" and in this case Jehovah, not Israel, is the speaker.

Jehovah responds: "I have answered, and will regard him"—I have heard his prayer and will regard him with favor. "I am like a green fir-tree." "The practice of worshiping under every green tree is frequently mentioned (Dt. 12.2; Jer. 17.2), and Hosea may very naturally point to this here. The prophet would have men draw near to Jehovah to worship even as in their idolatrous days they had performed their rites under the green trees. They that dwell under such a shade shall flourish" (Blake). "From me is thy fruit found." Jehovah reminds Ephraim of the source of his prosperity. Compare Jer. 15.4.

"What is it that we trust in as a nation? Is it the stability of our commerce, the resources of our wealth, the business of our law-makers; or is it the blessing of God, of our Father, given as he gives it to a community which believes in the honesty of the details of its trade, and lays its secular foundations in natural fairness and good will, and has its spiritual strength in the faith and disciplined obedience of child-like hearts?" (E. S. Talbot).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I will be as the dew unto Israel, 14.5. As in California it is the dews that keep vegetation green during the dry season, so in Palestine, where rain does not fall from May to October, the heavy dews are refreshing and quickening. Abundant as the dews are God's mercies, and his love will revivify the Israelites, scorched, as one might say, by sin, even as the dew revives the scorched vegetation.

And his smell as Lebanon, 14.6. In many parts of the East the people are excessively fond of perfuming their garments. They sprinkle their clothing with sweet-scented oils extracted from spices or sandal-wood, and with a great variety of strangely perfumed waters. They make use of camphor, civet wood, sandal-wood, aloes, and even sometimes sew chips of perfumed wood into their garments. Reference is made to this custom in Solomon's Song, 4.11: the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.—James M. Freeman, in Bible Customs.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Condition in Israel in the Time of Hosea. When Hosea was a young man, Jeroboam II was King of Israel. His rule was a strong one, and the kingdom was powerful. Then Jeroboam died. Assyria completely absorbed Syria and raided the borders of Israel remorselessly. Social disorders, and idolatrous excesses, sapped the kingdom from within. King followed king upon the throne. It was in the time of Israel's disasters from without and from within that Hosea uttered his warnings. He had heard the denunciations of Amos, who had come from Judah to warn Israel, and who had prophesied the very troubles that were now coming to pass. To understand how Hosea came himself to prophesy and warn, and how he came by the great thought of his whole book—that God is love—one must read carefully all the chapters.

The Prophet Hosea. See page 23 of our Introduction.

The Book of Hosea. See page 24 of our Introduction.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What patience and love fail to do, criticism and blame will not accomplish. "Christ used force only once, and that was to drive profane ones out of his temple, not to force them in. There must be a gentle, gracious, loving quality in all our rebukes; and a background of hopeful belief if they are to have any healing virtue." This is a principle that every successful teacher has made his own.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD

Beginning the Lesson. In the biography of Louis Agassiz, the great scientist, there is a vivid account of the descent once made by him into the heart of a glacier. A great rope was fastened about him, and he was slowly lowered by his assistants to a depth of one hundred and twenty-five feet. When he had finished his examination and was ready to signal the men to draw him up, he was appalled at the sight that met his upward gaze, at the huge icicles which, pointing downward, had not hindered his descent, but which like javelins might easily cut his rope in two as it was being drawn upward.

Descent is always easier than ascent, whether from the safe path into a glacier's crevasse and back again or from the path of righteousness into sin and back again. The Israelites had made the descent; can the prophet Hosea lead them safely back?

The people of the Northern Kingdom, to whom Hosea prophesied, never did return to Jehovah. They abandoned their religion when they went into captivity, and in losing their religion lost their nationality, and have forever disappeared from the world's history. Looking for the Lost Ten Tribes (in the words of Dr. Lyman Abbott) is like looking for the drops of rain which have fallen on the Great Desert, or for the cloud which the sun has drunk up in a July sky. But the love of God which Hosea experienced is eternal, and the power of that love and the joy of that love in the return of the repentant are eternal, and in this love, rejoicing to rescue from sin whoever will accept rescue, lies the secret of all restoration to life from apostasy, national or individual. Hosea saw God truly; for Israel he hoped beyond measure.

Backsliders. Backsliding: to fall away; especially, to abandon gradually the faith and practice of a religion that has been professed. This is Webster's definition. The term calls to our mind some one toiling up a hill, and then slipping backward. The spiritual life is an upward climb, and he who gives up the faith with which he starts and fails to put into practice the principles which govern that life, slips backward, backslides.

There are roads in Austria where the sign-boards say, *Rückgang verboten,* Return forbidden. Having once started on such a road (which is too narrow for carriages to pass), you must keep on to your destination. There is no such sign-board on the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

There are various degrees of backsliding. There is the persistent backslider, such as the one referred to by a colored brother at a church meeting in these words: "Brudder Baker keeps er fallin' from grace an' er habin' his name tuck off ob de book, an' den he comes back ergin; Brudder Techstone, I moves dat we buy er

slate ter put Brudder Baker's name on ter keep from er mutilatin' der records of de church."

There is the continuous backslider, who once having started on the backward decline, never regains his footing: a Judas who is first a thief, then a traitor, and then a suicide. When Ezra was about to go with a colony of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem to reëstablish the worship of Jehovah in the Holy Land, he gathered his followers together near the river that runneth to Ahava, and as they passed before him in review he "found none of the sons of Levi": of almost every company of followers of Christ, there are some who will be lacking in the final review.

And there is the now-and-then backslider; a Peter who stumbles and falls, but rises repentant and presses onward. No one is sinless, and he who follows Hosea's exhortation, and returns unto the Lord with words of sincere repentance, will ever find him ready to forgive and bless.

Loving-kindness God's Sovereign Attribute. For the first time in history it dawned upon the human mind that God's sovereign attribute in heaven and in earth is his loving-kindness. The words almost tremble on the prophet's lips, though it was reserved for an apostle to utter them, that "God is love." Later seers and prophets would express the truth in many other noble and beautiful forms, but there is a mingling of burning passion and melting pathos in Hosea's primitive Hebrew gospel—his protevangelium—which makes it forever memorable. For the first time it is seen that the real and fundamental difference between God and man is not his almightiness appalling our impotence, his greatness dwarfing our littleness, his omniscience amazing our ignorance, but his love shaming our lovelessness. That is the quintessence of Deity. By loving and redeeming where it was natural, as all the world thought, to loathe and reject, Hosea instinctively separated himself from men, took sides with God, and suddenly found himself caught up to a height from which he could see, as man had never seen before, that

Broad and deep and glorious,
Like the heavens above,
Shines in might victorious,
God's eternal love.

For how many thousands, or millions, of years had the living God been waiting for some mind to mirror and reveal his true nature to man!—James Strahan, in Expository Times.

The Great Discovery. There is a story by the late Earl of Beaconsfield in which there is this curious situation. There is the son of a statesman who has been brought up remote from his father, and has simply heard the story of his father's name and fame. He has the idea that his father cannot care for him, because he has such big things to do; his father is interested in great diplomatic affairs, is managing nations, and has no time for the child of his heart. But at last the day comes when the boy is sent for by his father. With beating heart he draws near to the cabinet chamber where his father is, and is admitted, calm, diffident, trembling. But the father rises from his chair, hastens across the room and clasps the boy in his arms. In that moment the flash of intelligence comes to him, and he knows his father at last, not simply as one who deals with great affairs of state, but as one whose love is personal, intense, immediate; and when he leaves the building his heart is high as heaven with hope and joy; he is a son, he has a father, he knows his father, and he is going out to live as his father's son.

Ah! this is life, to know our Father, God. This is the greatest thing in the world, the greatest possibility in the world, the greatest opportunity in the world. I utter the words once more in your hearing, and beg you to hide them in your heart: "This is life—abundant life," said Jesus, "more life and fuller—this is eternal life, to know God."—C. Silvester Horne.

How We Gain our Assurance of the Loving-kindness of God. We know the love of God by the revelation of the Son of God. We take it sometimes in the face of what seem contradictory experiences, and cling to it through hardships which we cannot understand, because of what he said. Nature gives us no unfailing confidence in the love of God; history seems sometimes to bring in evidence against the love of God. But he who knows God speaks, and in his word and life declares, and on the cross declares again, that our pain is not a negation of God's love. The Son of God was acquainted with grief. But he called God Father in the face of it all. He proclaimed the gospel of the love of God.—George Hodges.

The Exhaustless Love of God. The measure of greatness in any living thing is sensitiveness to suffering. A stone suffers not at all, it has no life. The oyster suffers a little, it has a single nerve. The bird is higher, and suffers for two or three days when its nest is robbed. Higher still the deer, that goes every whither moaning for its fawn, and whose suffering lasts for weeks. The Indian mother is higher, and remembers her babe through the summer and the winter. But what sensitiveness comes when the Christian mother appears! Her mother-love worships her babe almost as a form of divinity. One night she wrestles with the death-angel and is defeated. The years come and the years go, but still the memory of the child is with her. A half-century passes. Time avails not to cool the ardor of her love. But though a mother forget her child, God doth not forget his sinning sons and daughters. Higher than a mother's and more sensitive is the heart of God.

The æolian harp is so sensitive that the softest zephyr awakens music among its strings, and there is no heartache, and no pain, and no cry of the transgressor that does not touch the strings of sensitiveness and sympathy in the mind of God. For he who beholds his pilgrim band going across the years stumbling, wandering, falling, bleeding, dying, follows each pilgrim heart with exquisite sympathy and with infinite solicitude.

The angel of his providence goes before the prodigal son. The angel of his goodness encamps on the right hand; the angel of his bounty encamps on the left. The angel of his mercy follows after to correct the transgressor's mistakes and undo his sins. At last God's love will find you out and bring you back from the husks into the Father's house. Men have misunderstood the nature of God. They have emphasized his justice. Yet justice without love is mere vengeance. God comes to seek and save the lost. Your sin cannot exhaust his love, your years of vagrancy cannot tire. He places inestimable value upon the soul he has made. His love burns on and at last will conquer and bring you home.—Condensed from The Contagion of Character, by Merrill Dwight Hillis.

For Discussion. 1. The prophet Hosea. See page 23 of our Introduction.

2. The Book of Hosea. See page 24 of our Introduction.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What in our day takes the place of the gifts which some people think must be pleasing to God, verses 6 and 7? 2. What does it mean to walk humbly with God? 3. What does doing justice include? 4. Can one do justly in every business today? 5. If you are a business man, do those with whom you have to deal know that you are a Christian because of the way in which you do business?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE UNCHANGING LOVE OF GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Robert Louis Stevenson became the friend and comforter of a man named Mataafa, who, as one of the claimants of the throne in Upolo, had been imprisoned by the powers along with other chiefs who had sided with him. Mataafa was very grateful for this kindness and sympathy, and talked much about his great love for the white man. Talk is cheap, according to the proverb, and perhaps Stevenson did not place too great stress on these professions, but a day came when they were proved. After his release, the Mataafa chief came to thank Stevenson, and said that he was ready to prove his love by his works. Now Samoans do not like to work, and labor is deemed especially unworthy of a chief. For all that, these chiefs decided to make a fine, wide road through the bush to Mr. Stevenson's house, not sparing themselves any toil, though it involved a great deal of it in that place and with their implements and facilities. At last the work was done, and the road opened with a great feast. The name given to it was "The Road of the Loving Heart."

This chapter in Hosea is full of declarations of God's love for his children. But God did not content himself with loving words. He showed his love by works. He has made for all of us a road to him. We know that Jesus is the "Way"—the real "Road of the Loving Heart."—Anna Burnham Bryant, in The Pilgrim Teacher.

A Faint Picture of Divine Love. "The Rev. Hall Young, missionary to the Indians in Alaska, tells of a visit to an Indian chief's home. The chief's wife was a splendid specimen of Indian womanhood. But the son was an idiot, repulsive and ugly. Though a young man in years, he needed almost constant care and at-

tention from the mother who loved him devotedly. A short time before, the tribe had accused him of witchcraft, and she had fought most valiantly for his life. When Mr. Young suggested that his natural death would be a relief to her, she burst into tears, saying: "Is he not my little son? How could I give him up?"

"Israel might be degraded and sinful, yet the great loving heart of Jehovah yearned over his people and he could not give them up. Human love, however great, is but a faint picture of divine love."

The Justice and Mercy of God. Two men—one of them indifferent to religion, the other an earnest believer in the claims of Christianity upon the human soul—went together to the valley of the Conemaugh after the great disaster that came from the breaking of a dam, in the hope that they might be of use to the sufferers. As they stood looking at the awful field of wreckage, beneath which lay hundreds of ruined homes, and uncounted decaying bodies, the first man said with a shudder:

"And yet you believe in an all-powerful, merciful God. Where is his mercy here?"

"This is man's work, for which he alone is responsible," was the prompt reply. "God made the water and gave it a certain weight. He made earth and gave it a certain force of resistance. He made men and gave them the intellect to understand these inexorable laws of weight and resistance. When men enclose a huge body of water behind a clay wall which they ought to know is too weak to hold it, it is man who is responsible for the result. Every broken law brings its punishment. That is God's justice. But yonder is his mercy."

He pointed to the distance from which on every side streamed relief wagons, and railroad trains laden with help and sympathy from almost every part of the land.

"It is only the life of a certain number of bodies which has ended here. But God through this disaster has lifted countless human souls in sympathy and tenderness nearer to his own nature."—The Youth's Companion.

What We Owe God. All the pleasant things of this world—the flowers, the sunshine, the moonlight—all these were given us by some great kindness and goodness which we have never seen at all. And this Goodness and this Love are the great Power out of which all things come, which we call by the name of God. And because God is so much above us, and so good to us, we call him by the name which is most dear to us of all earthly names—our Father. When a father goes away from home, still his children know that he is somewhere, though they cannot see him, and they know what to do in order to please him. So it is with the great unseen Father of us all.—Dean Stanley.

In the Middle of God's Love. Standing on the top of the Cheviot Hills, his little son's hands closed in his, a father taught the truth of God's boundless love (as told in "Thoughts for the King's Children"). Pointing northward over Scotland, and southward over England, and eastward over the German Ocean, and westward over hill and dale, and then, sweeping his hand around the whole circling horizon, he said: "Johnny, my boy, God's love is as big as all that!" "Why, father," the boy replied with sparkling eyes, "then we must be in the middle of it!"

Sentence Sermons.

To think of it! He knows me
Through and through;
And yet he loves me,
Tenderly and true.—Arthur B. Rhinow.

The love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.—F. W. Faber.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.
1. What answers do the people suggest to the inquiry as to what is pleasing to God? 2. What answer does Micah make to that question? 3. What does God want you to do? 4. In what ways can you do justly? 5. If you love kindness, what will you do differently from what you often do? 6. If you walk humbly with God, how will you regard him?

MICAH CHAMPIONS THE OPPRESSED

GOLDEN TEXT: He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6.8

LESSON Micah, chapters 2, 3, 6 and 7.1-6 DEVOTIONAL READING James 1.23-27

MICAH 2.1 Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. 3 Therefore thus saith Jehovah: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil from which ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall ye walk haughtily; for it is an evil time.

6.1 Hear ye now what Jehovah saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. 2 Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah's controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. 3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. 4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. 5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; *remember* from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah.

6 Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? 7 will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?

9 The voice of Jehovah crieth unto the city, and *the man of* wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. 10 Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable? 11 Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights? 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. 13 Therefore I also have smitten thee with a grievous wound; I have made thee desolate because of thy sins.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GREED OF THE WEALTHY AND THEIR PUNISHMENT, 2.1-3. "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds!" cries the prophet. "When the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand." Micah is here arraigning the wealthy classes. He charges them with lying awake nights to plan and plot evil—how to get the better of the poor—and with carrying out their schemes when daylight comes, because they had the power. They believed that might makes right.

"They covet fields, and seize them (as Ahab did Naboth's vineyard); and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." "The prophet does not detail the steps of the process of seizure—through foreclosure of mortgages, usurious rates of interest, bribery of judges, and the like. No legal procedure can make right in Micah's eyes the fact that his poor neighbors are being ousted from their homesteads by the grasping rich; compare 1 K. 21; Hos. 5.10; Isa. 5.8" (J. M. P. Smith).

"Therefore thus saith Jehovah," solemnly the prophet asserted: "Behold, against this family (the whole family of Israel) do I devise an evil." While they were devising evil, verse 1, Jehovah was devising punishment, the prophet declares, and punishment from which there would be no escape. "For it is an evil time": the time was evil, for men were living as if God were not, and evil was threatening in the Assyrians who were advancing victoriously westward.

"They devise iniquity against their fellows; but Jehovah devises evil against them. This is ever so, and the evil which God devises against the devising of iniquity, is ever the outworking of that very iniquity in its reaction upon the evil workers. There is no escape from God, and that fact is the reason of confidence, and the secret of peace, in the days most full of the apparent triumph of evil men" (G. Campbell Morgan).

II. A DRAMATIC PICTURE OF JEHOVAH PLEADING HIS CAUSE AGAINST HIS FAITHLESS PEOPLE, 6.1-5. The prophet, in a burst of oratorical

passion, here declares that Jehovah will contend or plead (the figure is that of a complainant in court) with the people before the mountains as judges. "Hear, O ye mountains, and ye enduring foundations of the earth," the prophet cries; "for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel." The mountains are spoken of as "enduring," for they have outlived many generations of peoples.

Jehovah now speaks. He is the plaintiff; the prophet is his attorney, Israel is the defendant, the mountains are the judges. "O my people," Jehovah exclaims through his attorney, "what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me."—show cause for your disobedience. No answer comes, for the only answer that could be made is that the fault lies in the people, not in Jehovah.

"The question is a very arresting one, and a very searching one. It is ever the inquiry of God when his people prove unfaithful; and whenever they will hear it, and face it, there must result the sense of the wrong and shame of their infidelity" (G. Campbell Morgan).

"For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam," continues Jehovah. "Always do the prophets go back to Egypt or the wilderness. There God made the people, there he redeemed them. In law book as in prophecy, it is the fact of redemption which forms the main ground of his appeal. Redeemed by him, the people are not their own, but his. Treated with that wonderful love and patience, like patience and love they are called to bestow upon the weak and miserable beneath them" (George Adam Smith).

"O my people, remember now what Balak King of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him": the reference is to the story recorded in chapters 22-24 of the Book of Numbers, and is a reminder of the way in which Balak's direful purposes against Israel were frustrated. "Remember from Shittim (the last camping station of the desert wanderings) before crossing the Jordan into Gilgal (the first camping station in the Promised Land), that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah."

"We do not know God till we recognize him as a Deliverer; we do not understand our own work in the world till we believe we are sent into it to carry out his designs for the deliverance of ourselves and the race" (Frederick Denison Maurice).

III. THE HUMAN AND THE DIVINE CONCEPTION OF TRUE RELIGION, 6.6-8. The prophet represents the people as asking what God expects from them: "Wherewith (with what present) shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God?" Moses had made provision for this: there were the sacrifices, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, burnt-offerings, heave-offerings, and there were priests appointed to approach God on behalf of his people and to make atonement for their sins. But these means do not satisfy the prophet. "Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?" Although choice gifts (Lev. 9.3), these would not suffice. Will Jehovah have regard to quantity as well as quality, will he be "pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" No amount of offerings is an adequate atonement for sin. "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Were he ready to go far beyond the law, to offer his most precious possession, his first-born in sacrifice, even that shedding of blood would not, he feels, purge the conscience from sin. We hear of human sacrifices in Gen. 22.13; Judg. 11.31; 2 K. 3.27; 16.3; 21.6; Jer. 7.31; 19.5; Ezek. 16.20; 20.26. "The tremendous religious significance of such a sacrifice must not be overlooked. Such offerings are not made by men who wear their religion lightly. But they are the expression of a wrong idea of God, and cannot, therefore, find favor with him" (J. M. P. Smith).

"It is so much easier to bow the head than to cleanse the heart; so much easier to multiply services than to be kind and truthful and humble. Hence the eternal Pharisaism which tempts men to teach that what God cares for is sacrifice, not mercy; fasting, not charity; orthodoxy, not goodness; rites, ceremonies, genuflexions, shibboleths, scrupulosities of outward observance, not the being meek and pure and just" (F. W. Farrar).

To all of this (verses 6, 7) the prophet answers with perhaps the greatest saying in the Old Testament: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ('good' is

here synonymous with 'obedience to the will of Jehovah'), and what does Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" With this definition of religion may be compared the last verse of our text from Amos two weeks ago: "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream"; last week's Golden Text from Hosea: "I desire goodness, not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings"; and verses twelve and thirteen of Deuteronomy 10: "And now, Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to hear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah and his statutes?"

To do justly does not refer merely to legal justice, nor to conventional justice, but to enlightened justice. The Master in the Parable of the Laborers who gave the same wage to the man who, through no fault of his own, had worked but one hour as he gave to those who had labored through the burden and heat of the day did not do justly according to legal or conventional ideas.

"For a Christian to do justly must mean to treat every man as an end in himself, and never as a means to my ends."

Justice must be reinforced by kindness. A man may be just and most unlovable, he may be "as upright as a marble column, and as aloof and cold." "Be ye merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful," said Jesus. And justice and kindness must be reinforced by a humble walk with God.

The prophet declares that the essence of true religion lies in doing justly, living rightly with others; in loving mercy, having a right spirit, loving what God loves; and in walking humbly with God, having a right attitude toward God, seeking to know and obey his will. God requires nothing more and nothing less from those who would please him than that they should live their religion.

IV. SINS DENOUNCED AND THE COMING JUDGMENT DECLARED, 6.9-13. "The voice of Jehovah crieth unto the city (Jerusalem), and the man of wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." "When God speaks in warning, it is the part of a wise man to fear and to seek to discover the reason why God uplifts his rod. The reasons in this case follow in the succeeding questions." "The rod" of punishment here referred to was the Assyrians and their approaching invasion of Judea.

"Are there yet treasures of wickedness (treasures wrongly obtained) in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable?" Compare Dt. 24.14. "The measure" refers to the ephah (which was about three pecks), and the law in Dt. 25.14, 15 was: "Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have." Compare Dt. 24.14, and see Lessons from Micah for Today, page 26 of our Introduction.

"Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?" Can any one be pure who deals dishonestly with others? The prophet Amos represents the wealthy as saying, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit?"

"For the rich men thereof (of the city, verse 9) are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."

"Although there are some sins denounced which are impossible in our civilization, yet falsehood, squalid fraud, pitilessness of the everlasting struggle for life, are exposed exactly as we see them about us today. Let us remember, too, that the community addressed by the prophet was, like our own, professedly religious" (George Adam Smith).

"Therefore I also have smitten thee with a grievous wound; I have made thee desolate because of thy sins."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of cruses of oil? 6.7. To gain the favor of kings, or to propitiate those in power, men brought costly presents. And they thought of God as a Ruler much mightier

than kings who could be similarly propitiated, only the rams and oil must be bestowed in far greater abundance.

Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? The Valley of Hinnom was for centuries defiled by sacrifices of children to the "devouring" Fire-god, Moloch, or rather to Jehovah regarded as King—an evil custom of foreign origin. The narrative of the substitution of the ram for Isaac (Gen. 22.13) and the law of the redemption of the first-born of man (Ex. 13.13) show that, although perhaps permitted "for the hardness of men's hearts" in earlier times, such human sacrifices were no longer admitted by the prophetic and legal interpretations of the divine will to Israel (Cheyne).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What king coveted a field and seized it? How was the plan devised? How does our Golden Text of last week befit this lesson?

The Prophet Micah. See page 25 of our Introduction.

The Message of Micah. See pages 26, 27 of our Introduction.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In What and Where Is God, Dr. Richard LeRue Swain gives a graphic picture of what religion was thought to be in the frontier town where he lived as a youth. His account of his own effort to "get religion," his identification of religion with an abnormal psychic state, his distress which lasted for years because the psychic state failed him, is grippingly told. Possibly some pupil in your class does not know what religion is, possibly he identifies it with Sundays and church services, with glowing feelings and correct beliefs, but has not grasped the thought that religion is for daily living.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION

Beginning the Lesson. On the desk of one of our municipal judges there lies a bit of cardboard on which is printed Micah 6.8. What are the words? Why, do you think, they are kept there? "I never convene court without that motto before me," said the judge. "It includes all the elements which the law's decisions should embody—mercy and justice. With it before me to heed, I cannot go far wrong in my judgments. I believe if I came to my desk without that motto, I should return for it."

Micah 6.8 is the prophet's interpretation of "pure religion and undefiled." What does it mean to do justly? To love kindness? To walk humbly with thy God?

"Wherewith shall I come before the Father of Jesus and bow myself before the God who is love?" questions Dr. Fosdick. "Shall I come before him with gorgeous ceremonies, with elaborate rituals? Will the Father of all mercies be pleased with thousands of repeated credos or with ten thousands of eloquent sermons? Shall I give the bending of the knee for my transgression, the offering of my purse for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Father require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? How many of us need such instruction yet in the utterly righteous character of God, and his demands on men!"

Wherewith Shall I Come before Jehovah? The spirit of reverence desires that all things shall be fittingly done, and naturally seeks to body forth the feelings of awe and aspiration and worship in rite and ceremony and music and symbol and architecture, which thus become the visible speech of the otherwise dumb souls of men. In this way were produced the great church buildings, the religious music, the splendid rituals and liturgies and the whole system of religious symbolism.

But these things, though connected with religion, are not religion in God's sight. They are simply the æsthetic and contemplative side, or aspect, of religion. Persons of taste and culture, or persons of contemplative type, are especially affected by this aspect, and easily mistake these things, or delight in these things, for religion. But the feelings which arise from a well-ordered religious service, or from magnificent soaring architecture, or from the harmonious blending of dim religious lights, or

"When through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise":—

these may be only æsthetic emotions with no trace of heart love and devotion. Where any of these are cut loose from righteousness, or are viewed as ends in themselves, they become an abomination to the Lord and to every enlightened conscience.—Borden P. Bowne, in The Essence of Religion.

What Micah 6.8 Says. It is not required that a man—or a nation—should love justice, but simply do it. And the corollary is true that man and nations are required to do justly whether they like to do it or not. It is distressing sometimes to do the just thing when we prefer to do the easier thing. Sometimes it seems as if the distressing thing must be the wrong thing because it is distressing. But distressing or not, according to Micah's statement, we are required to do it if it is just.

It is not required that men should always do the merciful thing, but it is required of them that they should love mercy. The reason why it is not required of men always to do the merciful thing is that, however much they may love mercy, they may not be able to exercise it if they are to be just. The governor that exercises mercy when mercy means injustice is not acting according to this definition of the whole duty of man. Mercy is contingent, not only upon those who are to exercise it, but also upon those on whom it is to be exercised. If we are to do justly whether we love justice or not, then whether we can do mercifully or not we must love mercy.

But this is not the whole duty. One thing still remains. The man that is sure of his own just course and is sure of his own merciful inclination has no reason for self-complacency. And what is true of the man is true also of the nation. To walk in humility is a constant duty. It is righteousness, not self-righteousness, that "exalteth a nation."—The Outlook.

Micah's Ideal is not a Minimum of Religion, but a Maximum. So easy it all seems! But is not the opposition nearer the truth? Rabbi Simeon Singer believes it is. "Does any one doubt it," he suggests, "let him seriously attempt to do justly by all men, to be just to friend and foe, to superior and inferior, to the object of his envy, his fear, or his contempt. Let him try to mould his very thought, word, deed, or lines of mercy and loving-kindness, quickening and widening his sympathies until they embrace every sentient thing, and refuse even to exclude the merciless, the unloving, and the vicious. Let him, when his soul is elated within him in the hour of his prosperity, let him determine and take no credit to himself, but regarding himself as a mere instrument in God's hand, give the glory to whom it is due; let him, when his soul within him is beginning to revolt against some heavy and mysterious dispensation of Providence, strive to bid his spirit bow in submission with the willing submission of love, not the despondent subjection of helplessness and hopelessness."

The Magna Charta of Spiritual Religion. Micah's statement might be paraphrased as follows without altering its essential meaning: Religion in its essence is righteousness and good will toward men and reverent humility and obedience toward God. And this is no lonely utterance of the prophet; it is the underlying idea of both prophetic and apostolic teaching, as well as of the teaching of our Lord.

One does not always find church members, or even ministers, particularly trustworthy in business, or delicately scrupulous in matters of veracity, or especially averse to underhand measures for carrying out their plans. This is not commonly due to hypocrisy, but it is at least partly due to the mistaken separation of religion and righteousness, to the fancy that religion is something which can be had or got, something the possession of which, like a kind of talisman, distinguishes the possessor from all others and marks him off as religious. There is no such thing as having religion apart from righteous living; true religion in God's sight is nothing but righteous living in the love of man and God.

Let us repeat then, with the ancient prophet, that the sum of God's demands is to live justly, to love mercy, and to walk in humility before him. When one is summoned to the religious life he is not called to anything mysterious and unintelligible, but to something level to every mind. He is called to live a life of justice and mercy among men. He is called to relate his life to God's will and walk in filial reverence before him. So much and nothing more; but also so much and nothing less. And this spiritual religion is not a mysterious something to be

got, nor a secret talisman to be possessed. It is simply a perfectly intelligible manner of living, to be acquired and practised and made habitual by the divine help.

Let not one ask himself whether he has religion. Neither let him ask himself concerning his religious emotions. But let him ask himself whether he is seeking to please God by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before him; whether in life and set purpose he is on the side of God, and of the things which are pleasing in God's sight.—Borden P. Bowne, in The Essence of Religion.

What Is it to Do Justly? "Can religion be carried into every business today?" questions Mr. Warfield, the leader of a Young Man's Bible Class. "Mr. Black, you are in the real-estate business. Any chance for religion there? Can you sell real estate and do justly—or deal justly—at the same time?"

"I have no business to cover up imperfections," said the young real-estate man—"imperfections in title or defective plumbing or workmanship in a house. The man who would deal justly in real estate must remember that injunction of Paul's: 'Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.'"

"What does it mean to deal justly with your employer?" said Mr. Warfield, turning to a young carpenter.

"To do your best work when there is no foreman on the job," was the ready reply.

"What is it to deal justly in a store? in an office? in a bank?" were questions propounded rapidly as the teacher turned from one to another. The last question came to Frank Thomas.

"Well," said Frank, "it seems to me that it is to be just as courteous and accommodating and helpful to the poorest patron of the bank as we would be to a millionaire."—George W. Tuttle, in The Adult Bible Class Monthly.

For Discussion. 1. The prophet Micah and his message.

2. What is religion? The value of sacramental ordinances versus Christian practices.

3. Commercial dishonesty.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why does Isaiah address the rulers as "rulers of Sodom" and the people as "people of Gomorrah"? 2. Instead of sacrifices and assemblies *per se*, what was Isaiah condemning? 3. Does ritual have a large part in the services of your church? 4. Why is it helpful to you? 5. How may it become a hindrance to true worship?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF US

Beginning the Lesson. Each alcove in the reading room of the Congressional Library at Washington is set apart for a special branch of learning—art, history, religion, music, etc. The motto selected for the alcove of religious books is Micah 6.8: what is it?

Our Lesson Text Paraphrased. Woe to those men of wealth so covetous of great estates that even in the hours devoted to sleep they are planning evil measures against the hapless peasantry, which at daybreak they carry out with a merciless exercise of force. Whatever they desire they seize, whether land or houses. No scruples restrain them, but, by fraud and violence, they crush and ruin the freeholders of Judah.

The message of Jehovah to a nation which permits such brutal tyranny is clear. He promises that he, too, will plan an evil, the issue of which you shall not control.

O people of Judah, listen to the word of Jehovah. He summons you to defend yourself against his charges in the presence of the mountains. O everlasting hills and enduring foundations of the earth, as intelligent witnesses, he calls upon you to hear the controversy.

O my people, what complaint have you against me? In what respect have I burdened you? How can you turn away from me without excuse, when you remember how I delivered you from cruel bondage in the land of Egypt, gave you illustrious leaders, brought to nought through Baalam, the seer, the crafty designs

of Balak, the Moabitish king, and manifested my righteous and friendly purpose on both sides of the Jordan?

O Jehovah, we cannot but admit our guilt, we have forgotten and neglected thee. How can we make our peace! Shall we present ourselves in the temple? Shall we bring more valuable beasts for the burnt-offering? Will it please thee if we offer rams by thousands and oil in rivers? Shall we make our last and costliest gift—our first-born son? Will such devotion win thy blessing and expiate our sin?

O my people, you need not have been in such ignorance of Jehovah's desire. None of these things doth he really require of you. They have no moral value in themselves. What he demands, as an evidence that you desire to serve him, is that you practice strict justice in all your dealings, cherish a spirit of sincere love toward your fellow-men, and obey his revealed will in quiet trustfulness.—Sanders and Kent, The Messages of the Earlier Prophets.

Religion Is for Daily Living. Professor Edward A. Steiner recalls the Almanac for the Year 1872 which was presented by the letter-carrier on New Year's day as he awaited his tip. The boy Edward turned at once to the funny page, and there he read:

"The Earth is Round on Sundays, too. The village teacher, in trying to explain to his class that the earth is round, had no globe at hand, and so he used his snuff-box and said: 'Children, remember that the earth is the shape of that snuff-box.'

"Now it chanced that the teacher used a round snuff-box on week days, but on Sunday a fine enameled box which was square. So when the State School Examiner made his visit and asked, 'Children, what is the shape of the earth?' they replied, 'On week days it is round, and on Sundays it is square.'"

You laugh at this story, and it is a funny one. But do you know there are some children of today who make just as absurd mistakes? They think that there is one kind of religion for Sundays and another kind for week days, even that religion is something to be thought about on Sundays and wholly forgotten on week days. The counsel that David Livingstone's grandfather gave him on leaving home for college is good for all of us to remember. "Dauvit, Dauvit," the old man said, "make your religion an everyday business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts." You know how grandly David Livingstone lived up to these words.

"What does God want men to do?" we are sometimes asked. The ready answer may be, "He wants them to go to church and be baptized. He wants them to take the sacraments regularly and to say their prayers and read their Bible."

"Well and good!" exclaims Dean Charles Reynolds Brown. "Thou hast answered right! He does want you to do all these things provided that it be kept clearly in mind that these things are means to an end and not means in themselves. If all these worshipful activities aid you in doing justly, in loving-kindness and in walking humbly before God, then they are beautiful. If, however, they are put forward as substitutes for upright, useful and unselfish action in the ordinary round of daily living, then they are worse than useless."

What Micah 6.8 Means. See the preceding topic.

Sentence Sermons.

What asks our Father of his children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways?—Whittier.

There's nothing so sweet as to walk with the Lord,
For we talk as we walk, and in perfect accord.—H. W. Pope.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. During whose reigns in Judah did Isaiah prophesy (Isa. 1.1)? 2. What happened to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and why? 3. What did the people of Isaiah's time do without the right spirit? 4. What did they fail to do? 5. When we worship God how do we sometimes fail to worship him aright?

ISAIAH TEACHES TRUE WORSHIP

GOLDEN TEXT:

Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart. Psalm 24.3, 4.

LESSON Isaiah 1.1-20 DEVOTIONAL READING John 4.21-24

ISAIAH 1.10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11 What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PERVERSENESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, verses 1-9. "The Great Arraignment" is an apt phrase given to this chapter by Ewald. God's chosen people have rebelled against him. Even the dumb animals, the ox and the ass, are responsive to their masters, but the people of Judah do not consider their Lord. This perverseness has brought punishment upon them, and it is only because of Jehovah's mercy that they have escaped the fate of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

II. OUTWARD SIGNS OF RELIGIOUS ZEAL DO NOT DECEIVE JEHOVAH, verses 10-15. The prophet now hears in spirit the remonstrance of his audience, Delitzsch thinks. "They would fain represent the accusations which he had just uttered as unfounded, by appealing to their exact observance of the divine law; but in opposition to this ground of self-vindication which the prophet has read out of the hearts of those impeached, he but proceeds to prove the divine arraignment which begins in verse ten."

"Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom," the prophet cries; "give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." By addressing them as "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah," he reminds them alike of their wickedness and of their danger. The "law" to which he bids them give heed, is the inspired discourse he is about to deliver.

"What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats." Their altars reeked with the blood of sacrifices, but it was all an expression of religiousness, not of religion. Who desired all their temple-treading (the Hebrew for church-going, as George Adam Smith reminds us)? Their futile oblations, their incense, their observance of the monthly festivals (new moons) and Sabbaths and their assemblies—all these Jehovah loathed, he was "weary of bearing them," for he could not brook (cannot away with) the combination of iniquity and solemn meetings. "'Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth' is the human way of expressing the inevitable repulsion produced in the divine Nature by the approach of unworthy worshipers" (Mitchell). It is the insincerity of their worship that is here so condemned, not the manner of worship; they said one thing by their sacrifices and another by their lives.

Long before this Samuel had declared, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Compare the words of Amos, 5.21-24; of Hosea, 6.4-6; and of Micah, 6.6-8.

"Israel's sin is strangely amongst us today. Ritualism without reality, and wickedness cloaked by worship, is all too common. Men think that God can be propitiated by correctness of demeanor in his house, and firm adherence—even to the point of championship—to the letter of his word. They concern themselves with externals of religion without giving any place in their lives to its spirit. And God still launches upon such his challenge: 'To what purpose?' " (J. Stuart Holden).

Their hands uplifted in prayer were stained with blood, and Jehovah would not listen to their words.

"Do not assume that no blood stains defile our hands. This is not a matter of murdering the body; it applies to every act of destructiveness directed against our fellow man. Our hands are bloodstained whenever we have been unfair, whenever we have taken advantage, whenever we have injured a brother by slander, or impaired his honorable name. Every kind of unneighborliness fills the hands with blood; and if in this plight we venture to call upon the Lord he will resent our intrusion" (J. H. Jowett).

III. THE NATURE OF TRUE WORSHIP, verses 16, 17. It consists partly in being cleansed from guilt and in ceasing from sin. If the words were put in the mouth of the penitent, "Wash me, make me clean; put away the evil of my days from before thine eyes; let me cease to do evil," we should have here the cry of David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Wash you, make you clean" are figurative expressions for repentance and amendment.

True worship consists also in right living, in service for others, for it is not enough to cease from sin; one must learn to do well. Dr. W. J. Dawson speaks truly in saying that human lives are ruined less by a positive choice of evil than by an increasing feebleness in their grasp on good.

"Keep evil in check by its opposite. Kill the weeds with the flowers, the tares with the corn, for there is an energy in righteousness, truth, and love which the malignant growths of evil cannot withstand" (W. L. Watkinson).

"That this primary exhortation, 'learn to do well,' now breaks out into four minor ones referring to the administration of justice, is accounted for by the fact that no other prophet directs so keen an eye upon affairs of state and judicial proceedings as Isaiah" (Delitzsch). These four minor exhortations are: seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. " 'Judge the fatherless' is mentioned for, if no decision and verdict were pronounced in their case, that would be the most outrageous unrighteousness, inasmuch as not even the form and appearance of justice would be preserved" (Delitzsch).

IV. A PROMISE OF PARDON, verse 18. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah." This translation Dr. Smith thinks incorrect here. "So plain an offer of pardon is not reasoning together," he says; "it is bringing reasoning to an end; it is the settlement of a dispute that has been in progress. Therefore we translate, 'Let us bring our reasoning to an end.' " Dr. F. B. Meyer takes the translation as it stands and writes: "We reason with ourselves that sins like ours cannot be forgiven, that crimson and scarlet are fast colors, that we must reap as we have sown, that we must always wear the badge and disgrace of the ex-convict. Then God steps in and says: 'Come, let us reason together. Don't reason with yourself and by yourself. Reason with me, because I can deduce facts which will materially alter your conclusions.' "

Forgiveness will follow repentance. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"How can we deal with glaring sin, with sin that is scarlet, that is red like crimson? And when the red stain has soaked into the very texture of the character, and every fiber is stupefied, what can we do then? Let me listen. 'Wash you.' There is 'a fountain open for all uncleanness,' I must wash 'in the blood of the lamb.' 'Cease to do evil.' Yes, I must turn my back on the roads of defilement. There must be a sharp decision, and immediate reversal of my ways. 'Halt!' 'Right about turn!' 'March!' 'Learn to do well.' Yes, let me diligently learn, like a child at school, until 'practice makes perfect' " (J. H. Jowett).

V. THE CONDITION OF HAPPINESS, verses 19, 20. Obedience is the condi-

tion of happiness. "If ye are willing and obedient," is the promise to Judah, "ye shall live in prosperity, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be slain by the sword." "According as Israel accepts the proffered grace of God and afterwards acts in accordance therewith, Jehovah decides the future of Israel."

"The blind and cowardly spirit of evil is forever telling you that evil things are pardonable, and you shall not die for them, and that good things are impossible, and you need not live for them; and if you believe these things, you will find some day, to your cost, that they are untrue" (Ruskin).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Ye rulers of Sodom, verse 10. There is an Arab proverb which is supposed to have been derived from this verse—"More unjust than a judge of Sodom."

The blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats, verse 11. The blood of these sacrifical animals was, in accordance with the requirement of the law, dashed against the altar round about, in the case of the whole offering, the peace-offering, and the trespass-offering; in the case of the sin-offering, it was smeared on the horns of the altar, poured out at the foot of the altar, and in some instances sprinkled on the side of the altar or towards the vessels of the inner sanctuary.—Franz Delitzsch.

My courts, verse 12. "Solomon's temple had only a single court; but a second court enclosed the palace, and a third surrounded both temple and palace together."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did Isaiah receive his call to be a prophet? What long reign ended just before Isaiah's call? What did Isaiah's vision teach him about God?

The Book of Isaiah. See pages 27, 28 of our Introduction.

The First Chapter of Isaiah. The first chapter of the Book of Isaiah owes its position, not to its date, but to its character. The seventh verse describes the land as overrun by foreign soldiery and such a calamity befell Judah only in the last two of the four reigns over which the first verse extends Isaiah's prophecy. The prophecy has been lifted out of its original circumstance and placed in the front of the book, perhaps by Isaiah himself, as a general introduction to his collected pieces. It owes its position to its character. It is a clear, complete statement of the points which were at issue between the Lord and his own all the time Isaiah was the Lord's prophet.

Isaiah's preface is in the form of a Trial or Assize. There are all the actors in a judicial process. God is at once Plaintiff and Judge. He delivers both the Complaint in the beginning (verses 2, 3) and the Sentence in the end. The Assessors are Heaven and Earth, whom the Lord's herald invokes to hear the Lord's plea (verse 2). The people of Judah are the Defendants. The charge against them is one of brutish, ingrate stupidity, breaking out into rebellion. The Witness is the prophet himself, whose evidence on the guilt of his people consists in recounting the misery that has overtaken their land (verses 4-9), along with their civic injustice and social cruelty—sins of the upper and ruling classes (verses 10, 17, 21-23). The people's Plea-in-defence, laborious worship and multiplied sacrifice, is repelled and exposed (verses 10-17). And the Trial is concluded by God's offer of pardon to a people clearly convicted (verse 18). On which follows the Conditions of the Future: happiness is sternly made dependent on repentance and righteousness (verses 19, 20). And a supplementary oracle is given (verses 21-24), announcing a time of affliction, through which the nation shall pass as through a furnace; rebels and sinners shall be consumed, but God will redeem Zion, and with her a remnant of the people.—George Adam Smith.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Next Sunday is Golden Rule Sunday. Take time today to recall the fact to your pupils' minds, to awaken their interest in the good work, and to secure their co-operation. Read what is said about Golden Rule Sunday on page 396.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE NATURE OF TRUE WORSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. "There is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that

which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil. And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Thus Jesus taught that a man, like a tree, is known by his fruits, and that no words proclaiming loyalty to him availed which were not accompanied by obedience to his commands. Throughout his public ministry we find Jesus flaying the formalism of the Pharisees, their praying to be seen of men, their walking in long robes, their devouring widows' houses and for a pretence making long prayers, for in all this they were hypocrites, play actors.

"Not curious creeds,
Or ordered forms of churchly rule he taught,
But soul of love that blossomed into deeds
With human good and human blessing fraught."

Isaiah, the great prophet of the eighth century B. C., knew that mere formalism. ritualistic observance coupled with unrighteous living, was repellent to God, and he spoke of it in scathing terms. What are his words? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Form and Formalism. It has been sometimes said that Jesus did not believe in forms. This is an error. Jesus did not believe in formalism. Formalism is the corpse of form—form after the spirit of life has gone out of it. Worship is the body in which reverence enshrines itself. As long as the spirit of reverence lives the worship is meaningful and beautiful; but when the spirit disappears, then the worship becomes demoralizing and corrupting. The worship of the Pharisees had lost out of it the spirit of adoration. It was cut and dried, dead, mechanical, without a heart and without a soul, and therefore odious to God and all right-thinking men. Reverence is beautiful and renders beautiful whatever form it chooses in which to express itself, but when reverence dies, then the forms of reverence become corpse-like and contaminate all who handle them.

Jesus believed in forms. They are, when rightly used, the conservators of life. If you want to keep alive the spirit of courtesy and politeness, then do not cast away the forms of politeness and courtesy. If you wish to keep the fires of love burning, do not banish the forms in which love delights to express itself. If you desire to maintain the spirit of friendship, be sure you treasure all its forms. Would you keep alive the spirit of reverence, then make use of the forms which are best adapted to feed and develop that spirit in the soul.

Jesus made fierce war on formalism, but he ever was a scrupulous observer of form. He was always in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He followed faithfully the order of the service. He repeated the prayers, he sang the psalms, he listened to the reading of the Scriptures. When he fed the five thousand on the other side of Jordan he was careful to return thanks to God before the meal proceeded. When he stood at the grave of Lazarus, he first looked to God in prayer before he spoke the words, "Come forth!" In the upper chamber he observed the forms of the Passover, omitting nothing from the ritual, sacred because transmitted through so many generations. The soul of Jesus was reverent. He found it easy to bend the knee.—Charles E. Jefferson, in The Character of Jesus.

What Jesus Christ Wants. Some time ago in an Ohio town there was an elder of the church who for years had been making money selling impure milk. He was arrested and tried by the civil authorities. The church took no action then. But one day in the court he lost his temper and broke out with an oath. Then the church put him on trial. For what? For selling impure milk? Not in the least! What had religion to do with worldly affairs like that? They put him on trial because he swore.

Some of us have been brought up in towns where just that thing could happen. Can you not see the Man of Nazareth standing there in that church trial and in his voice of thunder saying again: "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy and faithfulness?"—Harry Emerson Fosdick, in a Sermon.

The Difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. The Roman Catholic Church puts the prime emphasis on worship, whereas the Protestant Church places the prime emphasis on conduct. A Roman Catholic pays an attention to the forms of worship which is entirely unknown in the average Protestant Church. The Roman Church devotes itself to the education of its children in forms of worship in a way which we Protestants have never adopted.

The Catholics have a richer and more ornate and more elaborate worship, and their churches have greater congregations than ours. They teach morality, and insist on the importance of it, but they do not put so much stress on morality as we do. For instance, I could belong to the Roman Catholic Church and be a wicked man. I would not be a good Catholic if I were wicked, but I would be a Catholic, and the Church would not put me out; but if I should deny the supremacy of the Pope, I should be put out at once.

It is not true, as some Roman Catholics have declared, that we Protestants do not value worship. We give it a high value. We have our forms of worship which are sacred and helpful to us. We have the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have our wedding service and our funeral service and our Sunday services. We know that forms are indispensable to religion, but we do not place the prime emphasis upon forms. We are more intrusted in ideas and ideals and the application of these ideas and ideals to the social and political problems of the world.—Condensed from Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, by Charles E. Jefferson.

Two Types of Religious Minds in our Churches. You know men and women who put the primary stress upon the ceremonial side of religion. They are very particular about keeping Sunday, very faithful in attending church service, quite punctilious about reading the Bible and saying their prayers, but you probably know some people of this type who are rather indifferent to ethical distinctions. They are not always particular about telling the truth. They do not hesitate at times to be unjust or even cruel. It hurts their conscience to do things on Sunday which many other people do, but it does not hurt their conscience to be indifferent to points of propriety or considerateness, sometimes even of justice and honor. They seem to be more or less color blind in the realm of ethical relations.

You no doubt know other Christians who have a strange indifference to the forms of religion. They seem to be willing on Sunday to do everything which they do on other days. They are desultory in church attendance. It makes little difference to them whether they read the Bible every night or not. They come to the Lord's Supper occasionally, but it is not to them a means of grace. To them it is a form which means little. And yet some of these people have very keen eyes for moral distinctions. They are very careful in the use of their tongue. They shrink from doing anything that would hurt others. They are punctilious about speaking the truth. Their sense of honor is high. They seem insensible to the claims of the ceremonial side of religion, but on the ethical side they are alert and wide-awake.

But no matter where we place the emphasis, we all need to sit at the feet of Isaiah, and listen to him as he tells us that God is not interested in the forms of worship unless we put an end to our wickedness. Let us translate his language into the language of our own day. What God says to us is this: "I am not interested in your church attendance and your prayer meetings and your communion attendance unless you go farther. I care nothing for your missionary meetings and your missionary collections and your Bible classes, unless they carry you farther. I am weary of all these religious forms that you are observing, unless they assist you in living the kind of life which Jesus lived. All this worship counts for nothing, unless you look after the morality of your press, of your stage, of your books, of your city, and of your nation. Cease to do evil. Quit your meanness. Quit your lying. Quit your cheating. Quit your swearing. Quit your gambling. Quit your loafing. Quit your shirking. Learn to do right. Study the way of doing right. Experiment in doing right. Practice the art of doing right. Go to school in order to learn how to do right. Work for a degree in the school of Christ. There is only one thing worth living for, and that is to hear the King say, 'Well done.' Cease to do evil! Learn to do well!"

Jesus has given us his idea of religion in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A certain man goes from Jerusalem to Jericho and falls among robbers who leave him bleeding and half dead. A priest comes along, looks at him, does nothing for him, and hurries on in order to perform a sacrifice in Jerusalem. He must be there at a certain hour. It is important that the sacrifice should be offered, far more important than that a dying man shall be rescued. By and by another man comes along. He is another kind of priest—a singing priest—a member of the tribe of Levi—a member of the temple choir. He must sing a Psalm. It is important that it be sung at a certain hour. He has no time to help a dying man

By and by a Samaritan comes along—a man who worships with a mangled liturgy—a liturgy which has not been approved by the hierarchy in Jerusalem. That man has time to put his arms underneath the man who is dying, and Jesus says: "That is the kind of religion that I like. That is the religion that I believe in."

Near the end of the first chapter of his Letter James says: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." The word translated "religion" means "liturgy." What James says is this: "The genuine ritual of the Christian religion is doing good." He was convinced of that, because he had lived for nearly thirty years with Jesus.—Condensed from Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, by Charles E. Jefferson.

Gladstone's Opinion of Ritual. It is difficult, I think, to fix a maximum of ritual for all times and persons, and to predicate that all beyond the line must be harmful; but it is impossible to fix a minimum, and then to say, up to that point we are safe. No ritual is too much, provided it is subsidiary to the inner work of worship; and all ritual is too much unless it ministers to that purpose.—William E. Gladstone, in The Might of Right.

For Discussion. 1. The authorship of the Book of Isaiah. See page 27 of our Introduction.

2. The Prophet Isaiah and his message. See page 27 of our Introduction.

3. The value and the danger of forms and ritual in our church services.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who is "my beloved," verse 1? 2. What is meant by "joining house to house and field to field"? 3. In what lesson were we shown how tenaciously the Hebrew peasant clung to his ancestral land? 4. What troubles of land tenure has England? 5. How does our country suffer from the evils which Isaiah denounces?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WORSHIP THAT PLEASES GOD

Beginning the Lesson. What revelation of God's character came to Isaiah in the year that King Uzziah died? He was eager to serve a God of such majesty and holiness. What call for service did he then hear? What was his response? He did not draw back when he learned how disheartening the task before him was. Loyally and faithfully through many decades he carried out his commission. Today we have a lesson from Isaiah. What is its title?

Forms without Meaning. Sometimes we make such constant use of forms that they lose for us their meaning. We do this in addressing letters to "My dear Mr. Smith," or "Dear Mr. Smith," or "Mr. Smith. Dear Sir."

A father had asked the blessing in the same words thrice a day for twenty years. One day he was called to the telephone immediately after asking the blessing, and upon his return sat down and asked the blessing again. "Why, father," said his young daughter, "when you ask the blessing you don't mean a word of it, do you?"

A young woman took part with apparently great fervor in the responsive reading at an Episcopal service. A friend who accompanied her said to her on the way home: "Ruth, do you really want to see anybody go blind and get the palsey, and die early, and lose his job, and get sold out, and lose his children, or is there any one in this city in whose blood you would like to wash your feet?" "What!" exclaimed Ruth. "You said it all," her friend returned, "and you seemed to be enjoying the thought." "Oh!" said Ruth, "I couldn't keep my mind on the services at all, for I was thinking about the examination I was to take tomorrow."

The people of Isaiah's time honored God with their lips, but their thoughts were far from him. They engaged with great zeal in the sacrifices and services which were then customary, but they did not do justly, love mercy, nor walk humbly with their God.

Isaiah Summoned the People to Righteousness. See Explanations and Comments; also the last three paragraphs of Two Types of Religious Minds, preceding topic.

Helps to Righteousness. Clara Gilsey at eighteen became a member of a church. She was an impulsive and enthusiastic girl, who had ample means to gratify

her whims. She now resolved to lead a perfectly holy life, and proceeded to surround herself with countless monitors of her duty.

A marble figure of Silence, her finger on her lip, stood in her room to remind her of discretion in speaking.

Pictures of once living women who had excelled in the virtues of truth, patience and charity, hung on her walls; texts of Scripture were seen at every turn; an alarm-clock struck at certain hours to remind her of her sins; even her purse bore an embroidered motto, bidding her "Remember the poor."

"With so many helps to holiness I cannot go astray," she said confidently.

Worship
From a Mural Painting in the Congressional Library, Washington

But as months and years passed, the uplifted finger of Silence and the pictured faces grew familiar and meaningless in her eyes; the clock was suffered to run down, and now uttered no warning; the texts upon the wall were covered with dust and were carelessly taken down because they were shabby. The monitors spoke no longer and Clara forgot to listen for their rebuke.

She gradually went back to selfish pursuits, and forgot that she had ever hoped to lead a high and holy life. She had depended wholly upon outside helps and guards and these had failed her.

Another young girl, Jane Vanger, entered the church at the same time as Clara. She was a poor workwoman, who was employed as assistant to the matron in a great city prison. For fifteen years she held this place, in which her duty was to make the rounds of the women's ward twice a day and serve the meals.

She had no costly reminders of her duty, no expression in art or music of her religious hopes and struggles.

During these slow revolving years what countless phases of vice and vulgarity and human wretchedness were open to her! She felt that she was sent there to do her Master's work, but she was ignorant and weak; yet she had within her breast a single monitor, and every day and hour she tried to hear it, to keep its voice clear. As she went about her work she prayed silently, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

She spoke to One who never fails to answer. With each day the hidden voice became louder, its call more urgent; her courage grew stronger, her hope more joyous, her hold upon God surer.

When she died at middle age hundreds of poor creatures followed her to the grave whom she had helped to save from ruin and lead to a better life.

Despise no symbol nor outward help to holiness, but remember that however poor you may be, God has set a hidden divine monitor in your own breast which never fails to whisper his name.—The Youth's Companion.

Cease to Do Evil. Three days I spent in the meadow, uprooting the few small weeds and cutting down the many large ones. The third day I hated to brave the intense heat of the sun, but I thought, "These weeds must go now, or their seeds will spread, and then next year—." I rushed feverishly on with my work.

When the weeds were nearly all gone and I was mopping my perspiring face and dragging myself wearily to the house to go through the ordeal of washing with laundry soap as a precaution against poison ivy, a thought came to me. It was not original, but it was important. If I had obeyed my impulse to clean up the weeds four weeks before, I could have finished the job in two hours. Then a brief trip in August to catch the late comers would have sufficed for the season.

When the weeds were little I was stronger than they. When they were old and tough my struggle with them was at best a drawn battle. Most of them were

burnt in the fire I made, but I was sunburnt almost to agony. Besides, I ached in every limb, and my head was aching till I thought it would split.

May the weeds rest in peace. They taught me a lesson that my first speller in vain tried to teach me—that "a stitch in time saves nine." They were efficient school-teachers.

My good friends, the weeds, said:

"Pull up a young weed, taking root and all;
It will not live to grow tough and tall."

The application is obvious:

"Pull up a fault while it's young and tender;
It will not become an old offender."—The Youth's Companion.

Learn to Do Well. It was a wonder to many that Ralph Harlow's wild escapades during those first few months in college never involved him in serious trouble with the faculty. But when he missed open disgrace that last time, by the breadth of a hair, Ralph seemed to come to himself suddenly and "turn over a new leaf."

Not only did young Harlow cut his old associates, almost to the point of actual unfriendliness, but he was chary of forming new friendships and kept much by himself. Cards and drink had to go, of course, but it was not quite clear why he should abjure sports, games, and amusements of all kinds. It was Graydon's theory that Ralph had returned to the traditions of a godly home of the stricter, Puritanic type, from which he had momentarily broken away; but if Ralph had religious interests and convictions, he gave no sign. Snow and Baldridge invited him to the Young Men's Christian Association meetings, but Ralph was evasive and never came.

One day Snow took Harlow down to the physics laboratory, where he was helping one of the professors unpack and install some new apparatus. They had tested an improved type of air pump the afternoon before, and Ralph was idly fingering the bell glass on the plate of the machine as Snow turned to make some casual remark. A thought flashed through the junior's mind.

"Have you realized, Harlow, that that space under the glass is as nearly empty as any bit of space can be?" he asked. "Stewart pumped it out yesterday, but it wouldn't have stayed a vacuum long if Nature had had her way. All the air in the universe, as you might say, covets that tiny bit of space and is crowding to get in. Something will get in—sooner or later. It's like that story Jesus told of the man who turned out the unclean spirit and flattered himself he could keep his house spick and span, and have it all to himself. The empty heart is an impossible vacuum, Harlow."

"I believe, Snow, that I should have proved the truth of that within the month," Ralph replied, with a frank candor that surprised his companion. "I thought I put the lines up strong enough to hold, but they've been weakening of late. Last night the impulse was so strong to drop back into the old way that I was afraid of myself. The next time I may have to let go."

"Not if you ask Jesus Christ to join the garrison for defense," Snow said earnestly. "He will show you how to fill your heart and life so full of vital interests that the other sort won't have a fighting chance. I have an idea that the soul can't remain long neutral in a spiritual sense. That's the impossible vacuum. It's got to fill with something."

"I believe you're right," said Ralph, soberly. "I'm going to try to demonstrate the proposition."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons.

"The weakling only prays God;
The stronger soul obeys God."

When we climb to heaven
'Tis on the rounds of love to men.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell Isaiah's parable and explain its meaning. 2. What are the wild grapes which Isaiah proceeds to enumerate in his "woes"? 3. Tell the parable of the Wicked Husbandman. (Mt. 21.33-46.) 4. What did Jesus say about himself as a Vine? (Jn. 15.5.) How did he say that we can bear good fruit? 5. What does Paul say in Gal. 5.22, 23 is the fruit that is pleasing to God?

LESSON X—DECEMBER 4

ISAIAH TEACHES RIGHT LIVING

GOLDEN TEXT: Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1.27.

LESSON Isaiah 3.1-5.30 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.6-13

ISAIAH 5.1 Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.

8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land! 9 In mine ears *saith* Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant. 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield *but* an ephah. 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! 12 And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are *in* their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD, verses 1-6. "Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard." "Isaiah begins his discourse like a player who has a crowd around him, and with alluring words addresses and rouses up himself and his hearers. But the winged rhythm, the musical euphony, and the graceful assonance of the invocation are inimitable, and cannot be reproduced in a translation" (Delitzsch).

"My well-beloved (Jehovah) had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill (the land of Canaan)." He gathered out the stones, dug it well, planted the choicest vines, built a watch tower and hewed out a winepress; but instead of the choicest grapes, which he had expected would repay all his care, the vines yielded only wild grapes.

"The owner had a right to expect much from a vineyard on which he had lavished so much thought and care. So God expects us, especially those of us whom he has blessed with high privilege and opportunity, to respond to his love by bearing fruit" (J. E. McFadyen).

"And now, 'Ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,' Isaiah cried, 'judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.'" The prophet of God identifies himself with God: as Knabenhauer says, he speaks out of the thoughts of God. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isaiah's hearers are silent, for the answer was evident, the fault lay not in the owner of the vineyard. After a pause the prophet continues: "And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the thorny hedge, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the stone wall, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; no rain shall fall upon it; and it shall be given over to briers and thorns and ruin."

"Thus God deals with nations and individuals. He gives an opportunity to all, with the one desire that there should be an adequate response, but when the yield is of wild grapes, sooner or later judgment must fall" (F. B. Meyer).

II. THE EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE, verse 7. The husbandman is Jehovah, the men of Judah are the vine. Jehovah had labored to make the people

bring forth the fruits of justice and righteousness, but they had disappointed him, they had called forth the cry of the oppressed. "The Hebrew words for 'justice' and 'oppression' differ, both in spelling and sound, by the merest trifle; so also with the words for 'righteousness' and 'cry.' It is impossible to reproduce this word-play adequately in English; one scholar suggests for the last pair 'right' and 'riot,' a rendering which gives at any rate a faint idea of the flavor of the original. The words sounded very much alike, yet how unlike were the things; just as the good and the evil grapes looked very much alike, but how unlike they were in reality!" (J. E. McFadyen).

III. THE SIN OF GREED, verses 8-10. Woe upon the rich and powerful who are so avaricious for larger estates that they "join house to house," seize houses of the poor (Job 20.19), and "lay field to field till there be no room (for the peasantry), and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!" The time would come when the land would be in the possession of only a few. The Hebrew law (Num. 35.54) provided that there should be a proportional division of the land, and there were stringent laws against the alienation of hereditary family rights: see Lev. 35.8-17; Dt. 27.17. Every fifty years, the jubilee year, all lands that had been sold or given away reverted to the family of the original owners. But the law was abrogated. "Behind the Hebrew regulations regarding the seventh year of fallow and the fiftieth year of release was the principle that 'The earth is the Lord's, not the landlord's'; that it was held in trust for the benefit of all the people. When the commercial development of Israel came, the primitive land system was lost. The independent farmers were impoverished by taxes laid to pay for wars. The land was taken for loans made by the merchants. The farmers became serfs. Economic ruin and social degradation followed. This is why the prophet cried the wrath of God upon those who joined land to land, and Jesus following them cried his great woes against the religious leaders who 'devour widows' houses'" (John Bayne Ascham).

"In mine ears saith Jehovah of hosts," Isaiah continues. "In Hebrew to 'say into the ears' does not mean to speak secretly and softly, but, as Gen. 23.10-16; Job 33.8, and other passages show, to speak in a manner that is distinct and intelligible, and excludes all misunderstanding. The prophet is able to distinguish distinctly the thoughts and words of his own *ego* from the inspeaking of Jehovah which rises loud within him" (Delitzsch). "Of a truth many houses shall be desolate even great and fair, without inhabitant," because the land will be barren, verse 10. "For ten acres of vineyard (literally, ten yoke, or ten times as much as a pair of oxen can plow in a day) shall yield one bath (the largest liquid measure, about eight gallons), and a homer of seed (the largest dry measure, ten or twelve bushels) shall yield but one ephah, a tenth of the seed sown.

"Ill fares the land, to every ill a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

"One remembers Isaiah's words when, in traveling in the Highlands of Scotland, one sees across the 'clearance' ruins of villages and crofts from which the peasants have been driven, that their place may be taken by deer, for which the wealthy brewer is prepared to pay a large rent" (London Chronicle).

IV. THE SIN OF DRUNKENNESS, verses 10-12. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink." Both Jews and Romans considered drinking in the morning disreputable, and intoxication at an early hour indicated confirmed intemperance. See Acts 2.15. They continued drinking late into the night, "till wine inflame them," excited them to madness! "In every vice there is a stage beyond which, humanly speaking, recovery is impossible. A time comes when the jaws of the trap snap together, and the victim is caught. In intemperance this point is reached imperceptibly, and the victim is ignorant long after others see his danger. His captivity is made known to all, and to himself, when he needs to rise up early to follow strong drink" (Expository Times). Our word *alcohol* comes from two Arabic words *El Gohul* which mean "the great evil spirit." Surely it is well named. It was the great evil spirit which took possession of such men; they were not their own masters.

"It is with remarkable persistence that in every civilization the two main passions of the human heart, loss of wealth and loss of pleasure, the instinct to gather and the instinct to squander, have sought these two forms de-

nounced by Isaiah—appropriation of the soil and indulgence in strong drink" (George Adam Smith).

"And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts." The instruments which had been dedicated to the worship of Jehovah they used to increase their reveling. "The harp consisted of a sound-box at the base, with wooden side-arms and a crossbar connected by the strings with the box below. The lute was a guitar. The tabret was a small hand-drum; unlike the modern drum, the parchment was probably rigidly fixed, and thus incapable of being tightened or loosened so as to regulate the pitch. The pipe seems to have been the wind instrument in most common use. It may have been a simple flute, a mere tube with holes, played by blowing either into one end or into a hole in the side. It is possible that it was a reed instrument with a double and vibrating tongue, or with a single tongue" (Hasting's Dictionary).

Ancient Assyrian Lute and Harp

"But they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands" his control of human affairs, the impending destruction which Isaiah plainly foresees. See Psalm 28.5.

"Pleasure-loving people forget God, his counsels, his work. Their love of drink and dissipation blinds their eyes, dulls their ears, so that they have no quiet moment to recollect their Maker. These verses are exactly true nowadays of many. They never have time to reflect, they enslave themselves to drink and a passion for amusement, till duty, charity, compassion, divine truth, have all faded out of their minds" (Edward King).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Built a tower in the midst of it, verse 2. At the time of harvest all fruit must be watched. In vineyards it is common for small, rough towers of stone, or booths raised on posts, to be built to lift the watchmen to a sufficient height to keep the whole ground in view; in other cases simple booths are made on a high part of the ground. In these latter whole families will at times take up their abode to protect their family property. Night watchmen on towers will call to each other across the valleys to keep each other awake, to ask how the night is progressing, just as in the cities the street watchmen in the bazaars whistle the one to the other at stated times to keep a check on one another's attentiveness.—E. A. G. Masterman, in Biblical World.

Hewed out a winepress therein, verse 2. The winepress was always in the vineyard itself. As the ripe grapes would not without loss bear carriage to any distance. So numerous are these winepresses, that in the course of one day's exploration on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel I discovered eleven of them. They are very simple in structure, but unless destroyed by man's hand will remain while the world stands. A flat or gently sloping rock is selected. At the upper end a trough is cut into the rock about three feet deep at the lower part and four and a half by three and a half feet in length and breadth. Out of the same rock, and parallel to this trough, is cut out below it a shallower vat, about a foot in thickness of the native rock being left between the two. This segment of rock is perforated by two or three holes bored close to the bottom of the upper vat, so that when the grapes were pressed in the upper vat the juice streamed into the lower vat, from which it was drawn off through another hole.—E. C. Tristram, in Bible Lands.

I will break down the wall thereof, verse 5. In regions where trees and bushes are not abundant for making a hedge, as is the case in many parts of Syria and Palestine, uncemented stone-walls, or walls built of mud-bricks dried in the sun, are used as a substitute. In many parts also a wall is built of earth.—Van Lennep, in Bible Lands.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What parable did we study in our First Quarter? What are its lessons? What parable did we have in our Third Quarter? Who told the parable? For what purpose?

The Condition of Judea. During the reigns of Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom and Uzziah in the Southern, the boundaries had been extended to their farthest limits and wealth and prosperity were everywhere in evidence. With wealth wickedness grew apace. The prophet Isaiah saw that the Assyrian Empire was steadily extending westward and would soon encroach upon the land of the Israelites, and that evil forces were at work in Israel itself which would inevitably bring about their own ruin. In his early addresses he denounces the corruption of Judea, and in the fifth chapter pronounces woes upon the wicked.

The Fifth Chapter of Isaiah. Dr. George Adam Smith, writing in The Expositor's Bible, gives this account of the chapter we are studying:—

"Its literary form is finished, its feeling clear. There is a tenderness in the beginning of it, an inexorableness in the end and an eagerness all through, which stamp the chapter as Isaiah's final appeal to his countrymen at this period of his career.

"The chapter is a noble piece of patriotism—one of the noblest of a race who, although for the greater part of its history without a fatherland, has contributed more brilliantly than perhaps any other to the history of patriotism, and that simply because, as Isaiah here illustrates, patriotism was to its prophets identical with religious privilege and responsibility. Isaiah carries this to its bitter end. Other patriots have wept to sing their country's woes; Isaiah's burden is his people's guilt. To others an invasion of their fatherland by its enemies has been the motive to rouse by song or speech their countrymen to repel it. Isaiah also hears the tramp of the invader; but to him is permitted no ardor of defense, for the invasion is irresistible and of the very judgment of God."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

You will find it profitable to study this parable as a model for your own story telling. Notice there is no hint of a sermon about it. It arouses curiosity and interest at the very beginning; it gives just enough details to make the story worth while in itself, and avoids all unnecessary details which would consume time and detract from the purpose in view; it keeps the statement of the moral out of the story itself, and makes its hearers agree with all that is said—even to the condemnation of themselves.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE ELEMENTS OF RIGHT LIVING

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, the British preacher, was once discussing with a caller the crimes of the city which do not abound in country districts, crimes which are the result of the overcrowding and wretched housing of a great city's poor. To explain the cause he said: "I have just heard of a plant in New Guinea which, if given plenty of space develops naturally, taking all its nutriment from the soil in the ordinary way; but if the district gets overcrowded with trees this particular plant develops parisitical tendencies. It climbs around the trees nearest to it, and, giving up its own root work, it feeds upon the life-sap of the trees to which it clings." What could better express his thought than this similitude?

The prophet Hosea, speaking in the name of Jehovah, says, "By the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes." One of the most beautiful of all the similitudes of the prophets is Isaiah's Parable of the Vineyard, spoken when he was discussing the crimes of the rich. What is it? What is its interpretation?

Much of Hebrew prophecy, as Professor J. E. McFadyen reminds us, is really poetry of the finest sort. This fact is obscured by printing the verses as prose. Professor Cheyne shows the poetical form of this parable thus:

A song will I sing of my friend,
  A love-song touching his vineyard.
A vineyard belongs to my friend,
  On a hill that is fruitful and sunny;
He digged it, and cleared it of stones,
  And planted there vines that are choice;
A tower he built in the midst,
  And hewed also therein a wine-vat;
And he looked to find grapes that are good,
  Alas! it bore grapes that are wild.

When Li Hung Chang, the Chinese statesman, visited our country a number of years ago, the first question he usually asked people was, "How much are you worth?" When his curiosity as to their wealth was satisfied, he would next ask, "How did you get it?"

In the time of Isaiah the leading men of Jerusalem had engaged in trade and grown rich, and then had engaged in "land-grabbing," that they might have larger landed estates, driving off the small husbandmen just as Ahab had done with Naboth, only they oppressed and evicted instead of killing. Isaiah boldly denounced them. "Oh, the pity of it!" he exclaimed, and predicted the coming of a time when many houses should be desolate, even the great and fair ones.

What Could Have Been Done More to My Vineyard? The diamond usually yields to the efforts of the grinding tool, which makes several thousand revolutions in a minute. However, a jeweler in New York had to confess himself beaten some time ago by a diamond which had been submitted for a hundred days to a grinding wheel making twenty-eight thousand revolutions per minute. The diamond came out of this ordeal in precisely the same condition as before it was touched.

Reading of this awkward gem made us think of the refractoriness of men under the purifying and shaping hand of God. How strangely and wickedly do we sometimes resist his wise and patient treatment! By the ordinances of nature, by the events of life, by the teachings and strivings of his Spirit, would he shape us, polish us, and make us things of beauty fit for splendid places; but we are blind, stubborn, indifferent, revolting, and infinite ingenuities of wisdom and love are lost upon us.

The awkward diamond was a curiosity, but we are forced to think that refractory souls are sadly common.—W. L. Watkinson.

Lloyd George's Proposal for a New Land Tenure in England. Great Britain in the past has been manufacturing goods for export and importing food. The long-continued unemployment of millions is causing serious alarm, and as a remedy Lloyd George has just proposed (April, 1926) what is virtually the nationalization of the land. He would have those who occupy land till it to the satisfaction of the government, or it would be assigned to others. The great estates and parks and shooting preserves of England and Scotland must be farmed, or the noble and wealthy owners will be dispossessed and their land given to tenants who will hold it by license from the government and must cultivate it fully and efficiently. In this way Mr. George believes that two million more agricultural workers would be employed and nearly all of Great Britain's essential food supply would be raised at home. Naturally the owners of large estates do not take kindly to Mr. George's plan. The Labor Party objects to putting so much power into the hands of the government, and thinks that land unprofitably used should be confiscated and distributed to needy citizens who are willing to work it.

Let us Give Battle. Shall I give battle to the greed that lays field to field till there be no place, to the truckling that calls evil good and good evil, to the self-complacency that makes the Pharisee wise in his own eyes, to the self-indulgence that is mighty to drink and to mingle strong drink for others, to the corruption which justifies the wicked for a reward?

Let Courage answer that question. How shall I arm myself for this battle? How array my forces to give hope of victory? Let Caution answer that question. If all the combativeness which Christians have employed in their conflict with one another had been employed in battle against the common foe, and all the caution which has been exercised in restraining Christians from hazarding a battle against the common foe had been exercised in planning the campaign against him, the Kingdom of God would be much nearer its realization on earth than it is today.—Lyman Abbott, in The Blessedness of Battle.

Right Living for a Nation. "The lesson enforced by Isaiah is just this, that in a people's civilization lie the deepest responsibilities, for that is neither more nor less than their cultivation by God; and the question for a people is not how secure does this render them, nor what does it count for glory, but how far is it rising towards the intentions of its Author? Does it produce those fruits of righteousness for which alone God cares to set apart and cultivate the peoples? On this depends the question whether the civilization is secure, as well as the right of the people to enjoy and feel proud of it. There cannot be true patriotism without sensitiveness to this, for however rich be the elements that compose the

patriot's temper, as piety toward the past, ardor of service for the present, love of liberty, and gratitude for divine favor, so rich a temper will grow rancid without the salt of conscience; and the richer the temper is, the greater must be the proportion of salt."

Pure Religion and Undefiled before our God and Father is This, to Visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction. When vast secular forces—business, industrial, labor, fraternal, civic—suggest that their adherents keep this day for Near East Relief orphans, as a demonstration of the value of the application of the Golden Rule to human relationships, it is in some ways more significant than it is for religious organizations to emphasize this day. Nevertheless, it is the Sunday schools that will derive most benefit from the observance. If Golden Rule Sunday were only for the children of this country, it would have sufficient cause for being.

It has been the Sunday schools of America, in response to the call of their national and local leaders, which, from the very first, have caught the vision of helping suffering Christians in Eastern lands and have come to their rescue, year in and year out, with a steadiness and generosity that has no parallel.

Across the narrow sea from Asia Minor is Macedonia, where two thousand older boys, graduated from Near East orphanages, are literally trying to put the Golden Rule into practice in their modest industrial work on Macedonian farms. There are thirteen hundred boys and girls at Corinth, and a thousand at Athens under the shadow of Mars Hill. Seven hundred older girls are in ancient Cairo. And ten thousand boys and girls under the very shadow of Mt. Ararat! Altogether there are over forty thousand still under the care of Near East Relief—"Golden Rule Children," they have been called. They are at once America's responsibility and opportunity.

We need to apply the Golden Rule to the whole of the world, to all of life, but where is there a needier or a more opportune place to begin than Ararat, Jerusalem, and Macedonia?

Golden Rule Sunday should be observed by the Sunday schools as nearly universally as is possible.

There is involved in its observance not only a presentation of the Golden Rule through Near East Relief, but an emphasizing of the vast wealth of America and the poverty of Armenia, Persia, Greece, Syria and Palestine; the luxury that surrounds us; the opportunities, modern churches, schools, books, games, recreation, security, freedom, peace, in contrast to the lack of all of these things which we regard as mere concomitants of existence; the stewardship of money and of life. It gives an opportunity to create sympathy for religious forms somewhat different from ours, to teach tolerance and understanding.

It gives opportunity to teach a broad patriotism, that love of country which makes America want to take the lead in lending such of her civilization to other quarters of the world as need and welcome it.—Condensed from an article by John R. Voris in The International Journal of Religious Education.

Making over the World. Shelley said of himself that he had a passion for reforming the world. There is no doubt that, as we begin to get acquainted with the great world, we feel more and more that it needs reforming. There is so much that is out of joint, so much evil and misery and suffering that seems cruelly unnecessary and stupid. Every young, eager heart feels at times the impulse to plunge in and tear up and rearrange and make over in some way.

It is the golden privilege of youth to dream of making over the world, and for such making over as is possible nothing is more needed nor more helpful than the superabundant vigor and energy of youth. Furthermore, youth believes and hopes that the world can be made over, and such belief and hope are splendid signs of courage and vitality, which should be developed and cherished in every possible way, and not mocked at nor neglected.

But while one is waiting and making up one's mind how best to make over the larger world, it is not a bad plan to do what one can to a little corner of it, and to try to make over oneself. This is likely to prove quite an undertaking. It requires prolonged effort and patience; but the effort is profitable as such, and also it may throw a lot of light on the effort to make over the world.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. We cannot afford to lose the farmer who owns his medium-sized farm. No growth of wealth can make up for any loss in either the number or the character of the farming population.—Theodore Roosevelt.

2. The teaching of Jesus about poverty and wealth. See Charles Foster Kent's The

Life and Teaching of Jesus, pages 167-173; Francis Greenwood Peabody's Jesus Christ and the Social Question, pages 182-214.

3. The Book of Isiah as literature. See page 28 of our Introduction.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Judah come into the power of Assyria in the time of Ahaz? 2. What is the purpose of the accumulation of titles by which Hezekiah addresses God in verse 15? 3. How was Jerusalem delivered? 4. What instances can you give in which the hand of God in national affairs can now be plainly seen?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Sometimes a mother has said to her son or daughter: "I am disappointed in you; I expected better things of you." It is a bitter thing to be told that one has failed to do what others expected of one, that one has disappointed them. Did you ever stop to think that we may be disappointing God, that we may not be living as he has a right to expect us to live? In our lesson Isaiah is telling the people of Judah how they had disappointed God. What did he tell them first? What is his parable?

As a result of all his care of that vineyard, the owner expected to have large, luscious, cultivated grapes, but he found only small, sour, wild ones which were fit only to be trodden upon and destroyed. Who were the vines in the vineyard on which God had spared no pains? What had he done for the people of Judah? God loved his people, but what could he do when he found, not the good fruit of justice and right living, but the bad fruit of oppression and wrong living; not justice between man and man, but the cry of misery because the rich oppressed the poor? The divine Husbandman had expected better things of these, his favored people, and they had grievously disappointed him.

What was the nature of some of the bitter fruit which he found?

Cease to Do Evil. A great naturalist writes on orchids: "What sensitive things these are! They will turn away from a dead branch, or try to secure a fresh hold if one on which they live is diseased. They show their distaste in an unmistakable manner, by throwing out new aerial roots, feeling their way to something better." This is the sort of sensitiveness we need—quickness to detect the scent of evil, and eagerness to fasten again on the sound and pure. Let no thought of advantage prevail to turn us aside to the right or left.—W. L. Watkinson.

A Life that Pleases God. What does the spirit of selfishness claim? "I belong to myself, and what I want for myself I mean to get if I can. I do not intend to do things that I do not want to do any more than I can possibly help. I mean to have my share in what there is; and when I want to do a thing very much, I intend to do it, if I can." This is the way that human nature tends to live—boys and girls, men and women, all tend to this way of selfishness.

But Christ does not want to have you live in that way. "He died for all that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves." Christ does not want you to live in the spirit of selfishness. But how does he want you to live? Not unto yourself, but unto him who died for you, and rose again. Yes! who rose again and is with you to help you to live the life he wants you to live. Living unto yourself means claiming yourself for yourself. Living unto him means carrying about with you the grand thought that you belong to Christ; that your life is a great trust which God has committed unto you, and which you truly want to use in whatever way is best, according to God's definition of best. Living unto him means caring with all your heart for the things that are great and good and broad and godlike—caring for broad usefulness, caring to keep very close in heart, mind and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you not say from the depths of an earnest heart such words as these?

Just as I am, young, strong, and free,
To be the best that I can be,
For truth, and righteousness and thee;
Lord of my life, I come?

—Condensed from the Silver Cup, by Charles Cuthbert Hall.

How to Live a Life that Pleases God. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away:

and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.—John 15.1, 2, 5.

The Quest of Goodness. There is a feeling in some quarters that being good is dull work. There are men who speak as if wickedness is always interesting, while righteousness is tame and spiritless. My own feeling is that all those people are as crazy as they would be if they went about insisting that two and two make five or fifty. The finest form of adventure upon which any man ever enters is his own personal quest for goodness.

Have you ever heard about the Bishop whose name was "Welcome"? When he was made a Bishop he found that the Bishop's palace had in it sixty large rooms, while the little town hospital across the street had only six.

"How many patients have you here?" the Bishop asked the head physician.

"Twenty-six."

"Your beds are crowded, and your rooms are poorly ventilated."

"Yes, Your Lordship," replied the doctor, "but what can we do?"

"There is some mistake here," said the Bishop. "It is clear that you have my house and I have yours."

So he had the sick people all moved over into the Bishop's palace with its sixty rooms, and he lived in the little one-story hospital. That interested the people of the Diocese—they had never seen it in that fashion before.

He announced one Sunday that he intended to go up into the mountains to visit some poor shepherds who were keeping their flocks there. The mountains were infested with brigands, and the Mayor of the town protested against his going.

"You would need an escort of soldiers," the Mayor said, "and even then you would imperil their lives as well as your own."

"For that reason," the Bishop said, "I shall go without an escort."

"The brigands will rob you."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"A harmless old priest passing along muttering his prayers—what good would that do them?"

"What if you meet them?"

"I shall ask them for alms for my poor."

The Bishop set out the next morning. He found the shepherds and spent the week with them, telling them about the goodness of God, and administering to them the Holy Communion, which they had not received for years. When he came back he brought with him a bag of treasure, gold, silver and precious stones, which had been sent to him there in the mountains with this inscription pinned upon it: "To Bishop Welcome from Cravatte." Now Cravatte was the ringleader of the brigands.

Bishop Welcome was like his Master. His goodness was not simply the rule-keeping sort. It was simple, genuine and spontaneous. His life also was "the light of men." Wherever he went men walked in that light toward Heaven.

Where goodness is real, it is the poetry of human existence. It is human action set to music and singing the tune that the morning stars sang together. That type of goodness, lifted up, draws men to it.—Charles R. Brown.

Sentence Sermons. Shutting the eyes to the danger signal does not clear the track.—Chicago Tribune.

Hate the evil, and love the good.—Amos.

I ask not wealth, but power to take
And use the things I have aright.—Phœbe Cary.

The best things every mortal hath
Are those which every mortal shares.—Lucy Larcom.

Ye shall not wrong one another; but thou shalt fear thy God.—Lev. 25.17.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. There is a chapter in 2 Kings which is just like this thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah: where is it? (2 K. 19.) 2. Where was Assyria? 3. What were the words referred to in verse 6? 4. Hezekiah spread the letter before Jehovah, it says: what does this mean? 5. What words in Sennacherib's letter were a defiance of God? 6. Read Isaiah's message to Hezekiah in Isa. 37.21-29.

ISAIAH COUNSELS RULERS

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26.3

LESSON Isaiah, Chapters 7, 31, 36 and 37 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 21, 1-7

ISAIAH 37.5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. 9 And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out to fight against thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up unto the house of Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah. 15 And Hezekiah prayed unto Jehovah, saying, 16 O Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, that sittest *above* the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. 17 Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, who hath sent to defy the living God. 18 Of a truth, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries, and their land, 19 and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. 20 Now therefore, O Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Jehovah, even thou only.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. KING HEZEKIAH APPEALS TO ISAIAH TO PRAY TO JEHOVAH FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SENNACHERIB, verses 1-4.

II. THE PROPHET'S ANSWER, verses 5-7. "Thus shall ye say to your master," Isaiah made answer to the messengers from King Hezekiah, "Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me." Read the words in the preceding chapter of Isaiah. "Behold," continued Isaiah, "I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land, and I will cause him to fall there by the sword in his own land." The "spirit" was that of alarm. What the "tidings" were is uncertain. To quote G. W. Wade: "If chapters 36 and 37 are a unity, 'tidings' must refer to the news of the approach of Tirhakah, verse 9. If verses 1-7 here are independent of verses 8-36, the rumor probably relates to the tidings from home of a rebellion in Babylon, where, after expelling Merodach-baladan in 703, he had set up a vassal king, who shortly afterwards revolted, and against whom he directed a campaign in 700. In the combination of the narratives mention of the fulfillment of the prediction about the rumor may have been lost; but the return of Sennacherib to his own land is described in verses 37, 38, which form the sequel of this account."

"Isaiah's fervid faith in Zion's inviolableness does not blind him to the openness of Judah's northern entrance: it is in one of his passages of warmest exultation about Zion (10.32) that he describes the easy advance of the Assyrians to her walls. He and other prophets frequently recognized how swiftly the military powers will overrun Judah; and when they except Jerusalem from the consequences, it is not because of her national strength, but because of their faith in the direct intervention of God himself. So at last it happened. In the great crisis of her history, the invasion by Sennacherib, Judah was saved, as England was saved from the Armada, neither by the strength of her bulwarks, for they had been burst, nor by the valor of her men, for the heart had gone from them, but because, apart from human help, God himself crushed her insolent foes in the moment of their triumph" (George Adam Smith).

"The chief characteristic of the world's strongest personalities is their faith in the future. Washington's fortitude, Lincoln's patience, the high courage of Lee, and the indomitable will of Grant are traceable to their immovable belief in tomorrow's triumph over wrong and confirmation of right" (S. Parks Cadman).

III. SENNACHERIB'S MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH, verses 8-13. Rabshakeh, the Assyrian officer whom Sennacherib had sent to Hezekiah to demand the surrender of Jerusalem, returned to Lachish, where Sennacherib had been encamped, and found that he had gone to Libnah. (Sennacherib had heard that Tirhakah, the Ethiopian general who later became ruler of all Egypt, was coming to attack him. "Tirhakah did not actually become king of Ethiopia till about 688 B. C. He was, however, the chief minister, and the leading force in Ethiopian politics, during the two preceding reigns of Shabaka and Shabataka; and it is a very harmless and natural anachronism to designate him by his later title.")

Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah demanding the surrender of Jerusalem. It told Hezekiah that the God in whom he was trusting was deceiving him in making him believe that Jerusalem could not be conquered by the king of Assyria. It reminded Hezekiah of how he, the king of Assyria, had utterly destroyed other lands and did Hezekiah think he would escape Assyria's irresistible power? Other little nations had trusted in their local deities and had not been delivered—Gozan and Haran and Rezeph and the children of Eden. Where now were the kings of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, Ivvah?

IV. HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER, verses 14-20. All this time King Hezekiah "was shut up like a bird in a cage in his royal city of Jerusalem," as Sennacherib himself says in an inscription on a cylinder now in the British Museum. Well did Hezekiah know his enemy's power. He was in desperate straits, but, as Matthew Henry says of David, when he was at his wits' end he was not at his faith's end. He betook himself to the temple.

"It would have gone hard with Hezekiah if he had not been to the house of the Lord many a time before. It is not easy to find our way thither for the first time, when our eyes are blinded by tears or our way darkened by calamities. But faith instinctively turns to God when anything goes wrong, because it has been accustomed to turn to him when all was right. Whither should the burdened heart betake itself but to him who daily bears our burdens?" (Alexander Maclaren).

There the king "spread" the letter before Jehovah.

"If a letter is not grave enough to be spread before him, it is too small to annoy us" (Alexander Maclaren).

Hezekiah began his prayer by addressing God as "Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, that sittest above the cherubim, the God of all the kingdoms of the earth." Dr. Maclaren sees in the accumulation of titles "how a trusting soul puts forth the energy of its faith in summoning to mind the great aspects of the divine name as bulwarks against suggested fears, and bases of supplication. What is Sennacherib's array compared with these?" The cherubim, probably composite figures, perhaps with the wings of an eagle and the face of a man, were attached to the "mercy seat," the cover of the ark. Jehovah was thought of as in the Shekinah above the ark.

"Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth," the king cried. Sennacherib had included Jehovah among a number of deities who could not withstand him, and had sought to make Hezekieh distrust Jehovah as no greater than the gods of other nations. Therefore Hezekiah asserted his faith in Jehovah as the only God.

"Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear," Hezekiah prayed; "open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, who hath sent to defy the living God." It was true, Hezekiah conceded, that the kings of Assyria had devastated countries and lands and cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of man's hands, wood and stone.

IV. THE DELIVERANCE OF JERUSALEM, verses 21-37. Isaiah sent Hezekiah a comforting answer. Jehovah spoke to Sennacherib through his prophet thus:

Lucien Layus, 1869 *José Villegas*

RABSHAKEH'S DEFIANT SPEECH TO HILKIAH, SHEBNA AND ASAPH. ISAIAH 36

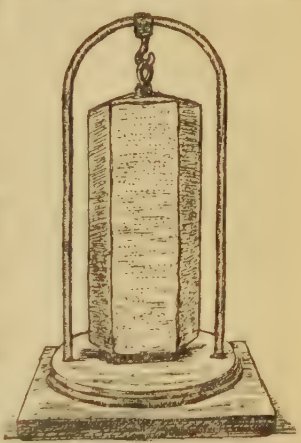
"Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." And the angel of Jehovah went forth, the record says, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand. So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass that as he was worshiping in the house of his god, two of his sons smote him with the sword and made their escape. And Esar-haddon, his son, reigned in his stead.

"The Assyrian army was smitten, not, as we usually imagine, round the walls of Jerusalem, for the Bible nowhere implies that, but under Sennacherib himself in the main camp and headquarters. Either these were still in the Southern Coastal Plain—for Sennacherib's own annals do not carry him south of Lachish, and Egypt often sent her plagues by this way to Palestine—or, if we may believe Herodotus, they had crossed the desert to Pelusium, and were overtaken in that pestiferous region, which has destroyed so many armies" (George Adam Smith).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He was departed from Lachish, verse 8. An interesting confirmation of Sennacherib's attack here is furnished by a sculptured slab discovered by Layard on the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh. There is this inscription over the king's head: "Sennacherib, King of nations, King of Assyria, sitting on the throne, causes the spoil of the city of Lachish to pass before him."

And shalt thou be delivered? verse 11. Sennacherib's own account of his invasion of Judah is given on the six-sided terra-cotta cylinder found in 1830 at Nineveh and now in the British Museum. It is often called "The Taylor Cylinder," because it was formerly owned by Mr. Taylor. The words are as follows (Dr. Ball's translation, in Light from the East): "But as for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, together with numberless fortresses and small towns in their neighborhood, I invested and took by means of the battering of rams and the assault of scaling-ladders (or siege towers), the attack of the foot-soldiers, mines, bills, and axes. I brought out from the midst of them, and counted as spoil, 200,150 persons, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep without number. As for himself, I shut him up like a bird in a cage in his royal city of Jerusalem. I built a line of forts about him, and whoever came forth from the gate of his city, I punished. His cities which I had plundered I severed from his territory, and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbal, king of Gaza; and so I diminished his territory. To their former annual tribute I added an impost of presents to my lordship, and laid it upon them. Him, Hezekiah, the fear of my august Lordship cast down; and the Arabians and his trusty warriors whom he had brought in for the defence of Jerusalem, his royal city, fell away. Along with thirty talents of gold (2 K. 18.13-16) (and) eight hundred talents of silver, he caused to be brought after me precious stones, carbuncles, kassu stones, great pieces of lapis, ivory beds, ivory thrones, elephant hides (and) tusks, ushu wood, box-wood, all sorts of things, a huge treasure, and his own daughters, the women-folk of his palace, men-singers, women-singers, to Nineveh the city of my Lordship; and he despatched his envoy to pay the tribute and do homage."


The Taylor Cylinder

And spread it before Jehovah, verse 14. Similarly the Jews at the beginning of the Maccabee insurrection spread out in prayer a copy of the Law, defaced with idolatrous pictures, as a witness to the outrages perpetrated against their religion (1 Macc. 3.48).—J. W. Wade.

Save me from his hand, verse 20. Cheyne refers to a striking parallel in the Egyptian version of Sennacherib's overthrow. "On this the monarch (Sethos), greatly distressed, entered into the inner sanctuary, and before the image of the

god (Ptah) bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept he fell asleep and dreamed that the god came and stood by his side, bidding him be of good cheer, and go boldly forth to meet the Arabian (Assyrian) host, which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who should help him."—J. Skinner.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In our First Quarter, what did we learn about the nature of prayer? Does God always grant deliverance from trouble in answer to fervent prayer?

An Assyrian Letter in its Envelope

Judah under Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz. Uzziah, whose death seemed so great a loss to Isaiah and led him to turn from the earthly to the Heavenly King (our lesson for Oct. 23), was succeeded by his son Jotham. The earlier chapters of Isaiah tell of the luxury and oppression of Jotham's reign. The reign of Ahaz, Jotham's son and successor, was one of almost unbroken disaster. When he came to the throne, Assyria was beginning her series of conquests, gathering in one after another of the nations of the western world. The kings of Syria and Israel tried to force Ahaz into an alliance against Assyria. They attacked Judea and took away many captives. Edomites and Philistines pillaged the country. Isaiah endeavored to have Ahaz rely on Jehovah, but Ahaz turned to Assyria. Tiglathpileser came to his asstisance, but imposed a burdensome tribute on Judah and aroused the jealousy of Egypt. Thus the step was taken which eventually ended (586 B. C.) in the captivity of Judah.

Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, "trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him." He reigned twenty-nine years. On coming to the throne he began his religious reforms; the heathen altars were destroyed, the temple was cleansed, and a great Passover was held.

Sargon, the Assyrian king who captured Samaria and carried Israel into captivity, was succeeded by Sennacherib, who reigned from 705 to 681 B. C. Against Isaiah's counsels, Hezekiah sent gifts to Egypt to gain her promise of aid in a revolt from Assyrian control. Chapters 28-31 of Isaiah give the prophet's rousing sermons delivered at that time: his words of warning against trust in Egypt, whose weakness he well perceived; his assurance of the futility of revolt against Assyria, whose strength he likewise saw; and his counsels to trust in Jehovah, who alone could deliver them. His "precept upon precept" fell on dull ears, and he declared that "by men of strange lips and with another tongue" they should be made to hear.

In 701 B. C. Sennacherib's army moved westward against the rebels along the Mediterranean shore. He conquered the Phœnician towns one after another, met and defeated at Eltekeh the Egyptians who had come to the aid of the Palestinian states, and then captured all the fortified cities except Jerusalem (2 K. 18.13-16). Hezekiah yielded, and sent this message to Sennacherib at Lachish: "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me I will bear." And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. After receiving Hezekiah's tribute, Sennacherib sent by his officers an insolent demand for the surrender of Jerusalem. Hezekiah turned to Isaiah for counsel, and here our lesson text begins.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Lachish was on the edge of the Maritime Plain, about halfway between Gaza and Hebron.

George Adam Smith in his Historical Geography describes the course which Sennacherib took in his invasion of Syria in 701 B. C. He went down the coast and conquered first the towns about Joppa. Then he defeated an Egyptian army before

Alteku, somewhere near Ekron on the Philistine Plain, and took Ekron and Timnah. With Egypt beaten back, and the Northern Coastal Plain mastered, his way was open into Judah, the invasion of which and the siege of Jerusalem appear next in the list of his triumphs. These must have been effected by a detachment of the Assyrian army, for Sennacherib himself is next heard of in the Southern Coastal Plain besieging Lachish and Libnah, no doubt with the view of securing his way to Egypt. At Lachish he received the tribute of Hezekiah, who hoped thus to purchase the relief of the still inviolate Jerusalem; but, in spite of the tribute, he sent to Hezekiah from Lachish and Libnah two peremptory demands for her surrender.

Sennacherib on his Throne

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The great heroes of the Bible all lived in close communion with God. They brought to him their joys and their sorrows. That God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, you cannot too often impress upon the hearts of your pupils. But teach them that while it is gloriously true that God is a very present help in trouble, the words do not mean that he will always save one from trouble. They do not mean that every Hezekiah who prays to be saved from defeat will win the battle. Defeat is sometimes the best answer to prayer. Recall our lesson in the First Quarter about prayer.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE RECOGNITION OF GOD IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background.

Jehovah Brought it to Pass. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah spoke to the proud king of Assyria and said, "Now have I brought it to pass that it should be thine to lay waste fortified cities into ruinous heaps," verse 26. In the words of Hegel, "Man executes what he thinks is his own will, and knows not he is but fulfilling God's intent." The arrogant king of the great Assyrian Empire boasted of the many cities he had laid waste, and wrote to the king of little Judah, "Let not thy God in whom thou trusteth deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria"—but God decreed that he should return to Nineveh without accomplishing his purpose, and God brought it to pass.

You have seen a picture of a small lad happy in the belief that he was driving a horse; the reins are in his hands, but over his hand is the strong grasp of the lad's father, and it is the father's hands that are the guiding and controlling power. So God deals with great men who seemingly control history; the real Guide is their Heavenly Father.

A Superior Hand Sets the Stage for Human Efforts. I can record certain facts about the coming of spring, but who can explain the mystery of life which it presents? By what preconcerted signal does the violet keep its punctual rendezvous in the woods, or migrating birds return from immense distances to places familiar to their memory? So I can record certain facts about human progress, that the Reformation was born in the heart of Luther, or that the writings of Voltaire and

Rousseau produced the French Revolution, but, after all, this tells me little. There is a deeper question, whence came the impulse which moved these men? Why should it be reserved for Luther to do what Savonarola could not do? Does not the conviction grow upon the mind that there is some superior hand which sets the stage for human effort? For ages men cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" and there is no reply; then, suddenly, a voice from the high towers of vision cries, "The night is departing." For ages men make abortive efforts to drive forward the chariot of progress; then, all at once, the ancient obstacles are removed, as though a mountain disappeared, revealing a practicable road. For ages great men conceive and utter great revolutionary thoughts and no one regards them; then, all at once, the world becomes awake and sensitive, and everywhere there is a sound of fetters breaking. Who sets the moment? Who gives the signal? Who imparts the mysterious power of life? Can we find any better answer than that God breathes his mind anew into men, that through them the moral world may be renewed?—W. J. Dawson.

God's Hand in the American Constitution. When the convention met in Philadelphia to devise a better constitution for the American government, it seemed at first as if nothing would come of its meeting except an increased bitterness in existing quarrels. The smaller States clung to the colonial idea and the existing plan of government, as that gave each of them equal rights with every other in Congress. The larger States wanted a centralized national government, with a legislature in which each State should have the weight to which its population entitled it. More than a month passed in fruitless wranglings when Franklin made his memorable speech, proposing to ask the aid of the Divine wisdom in their deliberations, and reminding them how that aid had been invoked, and not in vain, by the Continental Congress during its session in that very room. His proposal was not adopted, as it might have given the enemies of the convention an excuse for saying that it was past everything but praying for, but it was not without its effect. A calmer and more reasonable spirit began to characterize the debates. A disposition to mutual concessions took the place of irreconcilable partisanship. And slowly the Constitution was evolved out of the antagonism of opposing theories.

But nobody was content with it, or regarded it with much more than a contemptuous toleration. The colonial party thought it a dangerous scheme for the creation of a strong government, which would land the country in despotism. The national party regarded it at best as the proverbial "half a loaf." Some refused to sign it. The majority did so in Franklin's spirit when he said he would keep his objections to himself, and hope for the best. With what incredulity they would have heard a prediction that the greatest English statesman of the coming century would characterize their work as "The greatest document of its class that ever sprang from the mind of man!" "They builded better than they knew."

It is no stretch of inference to regard the Constitution as the result of God's wise discipline of the country through the troubles which preceded its adoption, and to refer to a divine wisdom those great originalities which have made it the model for more than a score of later governments.—Robert Ellis Thompson.

God Answers Prayer for Victory in His Own Way. General Gordon, of Atlanta, told me how the Confederate troops prayed for victory before the battle of Sharpsburg. The day before the battle they prayed earnestly that they might be victorious, so earnestly that both officers and men felt that their prayers would be answered. General Gordon said that many felt satisfied that the Confederate forces would sweep the Union lines, and would be on their way to Washington within a week. But the next day the battle occurred, and in results it was one of the most crushing blows that the Confederates received during the war. General Gordon, who was shot five times, said that after the battle the men were discouraged. They felt that God was on the side of the largest legions. Some of the officers suggested that it would be better to spend less time in praying and more time in manufacturing bullets and powder. The suggestion seemed a good one even to the general. But he told me years afterward that the prayers of the Confederates on the day before the battle were best answered by defeat; that if the Confederates had captured Washington and defeated the Union, our nation would now be far down the scale among the weaker nations of the earth. So God answers prayer in his own way. —Russell H. Conwell.

Why the Germans Failed. General Smuts was the guest of honor at a public dinner. After the meal different men were introduced to him. One of these, an eager

student of strategy, thought it an opportunity to learn the General's opinion as to why the Germans lost the battle of the Marne. When he put the question, Smuts replied, "It was God's doing." Some of the bystanders marvelled, unaccustomed to the serious introduction of God's name into after-dinner talk. Smuts turned to them and said simply: "There was no military reason for the German action. It was a pure blunder. God did not mean Paris to fall."—Sunday School Chronicle.

What We Need. "What we need is a profound faith in God's ruling all things," said General Gordon. John Wesley had that faith when he said, "I read my newspaper in order to see how God governs the world."

Cromwell had that faith. "What are all our histories," he asked, "but God manifesting himself, that he hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that he had not planted?"

Lincoln had that faith. "No human council hath devised nor hath any human mind worked out these great things," he declared. "They are the gracious gifts of the most high God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy." And again he said: "Now at the end of three years' struggle the nation's condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God wills the removal of a great wrong and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

Is that faith ours? Can we say with Dr. Lyman Abbott: "I no longer look back for the evidence that God was in history—though I believe that he was in history—but I look about me to see him in history now."

For Discussion. Lessons for today from the Book of Isaiah. See page 28 of our Introduction.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
GOD THE RULER OF NATIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Some years ago three travelers in England looked with interest at a stranger who entered their compartment just as the train was starting. His bag and sword-case indicated that he was a military man. Said one of them: "I'm glad you have joined us, for we have been warmly discussing the comparative merits of Napoleon and Wellington. We should like your opinion as a military man as to which of these was the greater general strategically. We are of the opinion that Wellington was the greater."

With considerable skill and graciousness the stranger proved that strategically Napoleon held the first place. "Ah! then, who won Waterloo?" was the rejoinder.

Reverently the stranger replied: "God won Waterloo."

So God overthrew the host of Assyria. What is the story?

What Isaiah Saw. It sometimes seems to me that we look upon life as one might look upon a chessboard in which the pieces played the game themselves. Now it is a pawn, now it is a bishop, now it is a king that moves; and why they move back and forth, and what the end of it all will be, we are puzzled to determine. But these great historians of the past saw God's hand on the chessmen, saw him moving them, and knew that at the end white would checkmate black, and sweep the black off from the conquered board.—Lyman Abbott.

God the Refuge of his People. The Forty-sixth Psalm commemorates some great deliverance, what one we cannot be certain, but many believe that it commemorates the time when, as Byron sings:—

> The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
> And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
> And the sheen of their spears were like stars on the sea
> Where the blue waves roll nightly on deep Galilee.

Dr. Hugh Macmillan says: "The Psalmist tells the Jews, when they hear about the destruction of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib, not to be carried away by the mere wonder and excitement of the miracle, but to be still in their souls that they may reflect upon and understand the meaning and purposes of the divine deliverance."

God Has His Derailing Switches. The railroad from Cripple Creek to

Colorado Springs drops more than four thousand feet in forty miles. All along the line are signs marked "Derailing Switch." I asked the conductor the meaning. "Why," said he, "if an engine should lose control of itself and come plunging down this fearful grade, it might destroy a whole trainload of people below; so we are always ready to wire to the first derailing switch where the switchman will throw the engine into a ditch or against the rocks. It is better to destroy one train than two.

All along the track of history God has had "derailing switches" into which individuals, cities, and nations that have lost control of themselves and become a menace to the world, have had to be thrown.—Edmund G. Rawson.

Lincoln's Belief in the Overruling Power of God. Early in 1863 James Harlan, Senator from Iowa, offered a resolution asking the President to designate a day for national prayer to God, "encouraged by the assurance of his Word to seek him for succor according to his appointed way through Jesus Christ." Stating that he fully concurred in the views of the Senate, Lincoln designated April 30th of that year as the day. In his proclamation he said:

"It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures, and proven by all history, that 'those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.'

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to God that made us.

"It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

God and his World. A certain man had become totally deaf and, in rebellion at his misfortune, had lost his faith. Looking at the world through the lens of his own bitterness, he saw only cruelty and injustice. After a while he learned lip reading. It gave him back much of what he had lost, but did not soften his bitterness. He was still angry with the God in whom he did not believe.

One evening, sitting at his window, he saw a man and a woman in the little park in front of his house. Something in their attitude betrayed their misery. He got his glass and "listened"; he could read their words clearly. They had come to the end of their resources, and were saying that the only thing that seemed to be left was to end it all. A fierce anger swept the watching man.

"That," he cried, "is a specimen of God's administration! I can do better than that, at least. I'll take care of those poor wretches myself."

He sent for them and had a long talk with them. As a result of the talk he put the young woman into a school where she could learn to earn her own living and he found a position for the man. The experiment turned out so well that he began to search for other people to help, and still others. His life became rich and full.

One day he began to think back. The trail led to his own deafness, which had been the direct means of his discovering the first two whom he had helped. Every step of the way was clear: the God he had denied had led him all the way. When he began to do God's work he knew that God was!

It is the proof that never fails. No man or woman can honestly try to live the life of love and service that Jesus Christ asks of his followers and not know that God is—that he is caring for his world today exactly as much as he did two thousand years ago, and that the reason there is still such endless pain and sorrow in his world is because there are still so few among the millions of earth who yield themselves to work with him.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Daily prayers help to lessen daily cares.—Spurgeon.

Behind the dim unknown,
Stands God within the shadow
Keeping watch above his own.—Lowell.

REVIEW: THE EARLY PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

GOLDEN TEXT: God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in diverse manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son. Hebrews 1.1, 2

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Let all pupils who recognize the allusion in each statement below, signify this after it is read. Call for the allusion and ask a few questions about the lesson in which it occurs.

The sun is set; and in his latest beams
Yon little cloud of ashen gray and gold,
Slowly upon the amber air unrolled
The faltering mantle of the prophet seems.—Longfellow.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
. . . . . .
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath flown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.—Byron.

We also have our calling of God, as truly as any ancient prophet; and round us also the tempest at times shouts, and beneath our feet the earthquake trembles, and about us fire threatens to destroy.—John Page Hopps.

Let each one ask himself whether he is seeking to please God by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before him; whether he is on the side of God, and of the things which are pleasing in God's sight.—Borden P. Bowne.

On Carmel's height a strong man bowed in prayer;
Helpless apart from God, in prayer he bowed.—Winifred A. Iverson.

The Nebuchadnezzars are God's axes with which he hews down fruitless trees. They are responsible for their acts, but they are his instruments, and it is his hand that wields them.—Alexander Maclaren.

"In a very real sense, we cannot indict a whole nation. The truth is, we do not know how many in that country have refused to bow the knee to Baal."

We may win our vineyard, but all the pleasure in it goes when conscience accosts us at the gate.—F. B. Meyer.

"Let justice, unimpeded by avarice or selfishness or cruelty, roll down as waters."

He who shows me the achievements of a brother man, touches my lips with a live coal from off the altar.—Carlyle.

"With the cords of a man Jesus is drawing men; in the bands of love he is binding the world together."

Help us with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity; touch us with the fire of thy altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city.—R. L. Stevenson.

Take the task he gives you gladly,
Let his work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly, when he calleth,
"Here am I, send me, send me."—March.

Up, Christians, leave your caves and do!—F. B. Meyer.

"Some of the dull, blind priests of that day were saying, 'Religion means sacrifice and burnt-offerings.' Then this prophet showed them the folly of all those outward signs of devotion apart from the inward spirit."

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Adults and Seniors. 1. Give three facts about each of the books in our Quarter's course.

2. What led to the downfall of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah?
3. Whom do you consider the greatest character in this Quarter's lessons, and why?
4. How did the call to be a prophet come to a man?
5. What is the historical background of the Book of Amos?
6. Compare Elijah and Amos.
7. What sins did Amos denounce, and what remedy did he propose?
8. In what words did Amos plead for justice?
9. What is known about the prophet Hosea?
10. How did Hosea proclaim God's love?
11. What is Micah's answer to the questions, Wherein lies the essence of true religion?
12. What did Isaiah teach about true worship?
13. What did Isaiah teach about right living?
14. What was the mission of the prophet in Old Testament history?
15. For literary beauty and religious import, what are the gems of our Quarter's lessons?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Who was the first king of the Northern Kingdom?
2. Who was the last?
3. What happened on Carmel?
4. How was Elijah taught his duty?
5. What adjectives characterize Ahab? Jezebel?
6. What adjectives characterize Elijah? Nathan?
7. What four great prophets lived in the eighth century B. C.?
8. Who was the prophet who exalted righteousness above ritual?
9. Who was the herdsman who preached social justice?
10. What do you know about the prophet Amos?
11. What are some of the charges which Amos brought against the Israelites?
12. Repeat Micah 6.8.

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults. 1. The Leading Events in Israel from the Reign of Jeroboam to the Fall of Samaria.
2. The Leading Events in Judah from the Reign of Rehoboam to the Fall of Jerusalem.
3. A Comparison of Elijah and Elisha.
4. A Comparison of Jezebel and Lady Macbeth.
5. A Comparison of the Messages of Amos and Hosea.
6. The Book of Amos.
7. The Book of Hosea.
8. The Book of Micah.
9. The Book of Isaiah.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. The Story of a Great Contest.
2. The Story of a Discouraged Prophet and the Lesson he Was Taught.
3. A Guilty King and a Stern Prophet.
4. How Three Prophets Were Called.
5. The Story of a Husbandman's Labors Crowned with Disappointment, and its Application.
6. Why the Drink Traffic Is Prohibited.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. In what respects was the world ready for the coming of Christ? 2. How may the real spirit of Christmas be lost? 3. What has the coming of Christ meant to the world? 4. What has it meant to you? 5. What is the prospect for world peace?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What city was meant by "the city of David," and why was it so called? 2. How long a time between the life of David and the life of Christ? (A thousand years.) 3. What famous young woman of the Old Testament lived at Bethlehem? (Ruth 4.11.) 4. What two letters have been added to all our dates of the last two Quarter's lessons? 5. What letters belong to the dates after the birth of Christ, and what do they mean?

CHRISTMAS LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1.21

LESSON Luke 2.1-20

DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 2.8-20

LUKE 2.8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 and this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE BIRTH OF JESUS AT BETHLEHEM, verses 1-7. A decree of Cæsar Augustus ordered the enrolment of every one in the Roman Empire. The people of Palestine were enroled in "their own cities," and therefore Mary and Joseph left their home in Nazareth of Galilee for Bethlehem, which had been the home of their ancestor David. There Jesus was born, and Mary laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn."

II. THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS, verses 8-14. God's revelations come to those who are ready for them. It was not to learned rabbis, but to humble shepherds at their accustomed toil that the wondrous news of the birth of the Christ first came. They were watching their flock at night in the neighboring fields of Bethlehem, when an angel suddenly appeared to them and bade them fear not as he announced, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." For the four words "I bring good tidings" there is but one word in the Greek, *evaggelizomai,* from which is derived our verb *evangelize.* And this was the glad tidings: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." *Christos,* Christ, is the Greek, as *Messiah* is the Hebrew, for *anointed, the Anointed One.* It was the title of Jesus as the One consecrated to be the Redeemer of the world. "He does not simply say, Christ is born, but to you he is born; neither does he say, I bring glad tidings, but to you I bring glad tidings of great joy. Furthermore, this joy was not to remain in them, but it was to be to all people" (Martin Luther).

"Jesus did not just begin to be the Savior when the shadow of the cross fell upon him at the end. The Savior was born at Bethlehem. The hands of the Bethlehem Babe were infant hands, but they were the hands that would afterward be nailed to Calvary's cross. He was not born to make a holiday, but to save the world, and to save it at any cost. Our shallow, superficial, good-natured Christmas festivity is far enough from what Bethlehem meant. Mary knew in part, the Wise Men knew in part, the angels knew in part. The heart of God knew altogether. Perhaps one of our highest services in modern life would be to recover Christmas for Jesus Christ and his real purpose in the world" (William F. McDowell).

"And this is the sign unto you: ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." The swaddling clothes were the cloth bands which the

eastern mother wraps tightly around the body of her babe, confining legs and arms. The sign was in the unexpected circumstance of the Babe cradled in a manger.

"What a picture of helplessness! But look at that Babe, manger, and clothes in the light of today. The manger was more than all thrones, the swaddling clothes more imperial than purple raiment, the Babe, the verily King of kings and Lord of lords. The humble birthplace witnessed the origin of the movement which has created a new earth. It is not difficult now to believe in the divinity of the wonderful Child. How can we do anything else!" (W. L. Watkinson).

Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared praising God.

"Have you never walked at night when the stars seemed nearer than the tree-tops, when to your own eyes the sky was aglow with an unwonted radiance? Have you never known some high hour when a heavenly host seemed to sweep into your vision? Have you never heard songs in the air which fell from no human lips? If you have never known such moments, then alas for the meagerness of your inner life! But if you have entered upon these high moods, your own heart will be the best interpretation of these stories of the Nativity" (Charles Reynolds Brown).

The heavenly host were praising God by saying, "Glory to God in the highest (in Latin, *Gloria in excelsis,* as the hymn is called which dates from the second century), and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Some manuscripts have the Greek word *eudokia,* translated *good will,* in the nominative case, and the whole phrase, *en anthropois eudokia,* is rightly translated, as in the Authorized Version, *good will to men.* In other Greek manuscripts there is an *s* at the end of the word making it in the genitive case, *eudokias;* this the Revisers decided to be the better reading, and accordingly the English Revised Version has the rendering, *among men of good will.* To show more clearly that it is God's good will, not man's—for the phrase is a Hebraism, meaning men to whom God is favorable—the American Revised Version has the translation *among men in whom he is well pleased.*

"Glory to God; good will to men!
Come! Feel it, show it, live it, then."

III. THE VISIT OF THE SHEPHERDS TO THE BABE, verses 15-20. The shepherds were dumb with amazement while the vision lasted, and then they said to one another, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

"O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight" (Phillips Brooks).

The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. All wondered as they told the words concerning the Babe which they had heard. Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. "The Protestant has seen Mary advanced by the Catholics to even more than equality with her Son; and in his revolt from what seems little less than idolatry has grown shy of mentioning the name of Mary at all. Yet is she blessed for ever among woman; yet is her character so full of grace and charm that the world has little to compare with it; yet is the story of her love for her Son an idyl of motherhood, so sweet and noble, that it has sown the hearts of generations with the seeds of a thousand tender and reverent thoughts. The Protestant need not worship Mary; but he may at least honor her" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

The shepherds were astonished at the wonderful message that had come to them, but they were not incredulous. They returned to their humble task of keeping their flocks, an outburst of praise on their lips. "It was a new world to them, but the same old duties remained to be done. They had lived through a night of splendor, but with the morning life renewed its ancient commonplace. "It is always so; from our finest adventures and our loftiest visions we have to return. Life

binds us all to certain common things, and we can only neglect them to pay the cost of such neglect in wretchedness. As life deepens and shades from its first dazzling surprise, most of us learn to thank God for the realm of the commonplace, and to be grateful that there is grey as well as scarlet and gold in the colors of existence" (Sunday School Chronicle).

Like the shepherds who returned praising God, we, too, would give thanks to God for his unspeakable Gift.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, verse 8. Much has been said about the impossibility of shepherds being out in the fields with their flocks in December, because of the snow and cold, but natives of Palestine tell us that it rarely snows at Bethlehem, and after the heavy rains of November the flowers blossom and the shepherds lead their flocks out to pasture. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent says: "There was near Bethlehem, on the road to Jerusalem, a tower known as Midgal Eder, or the watch-tower of the flock. Here was the station where shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrifice in the temple. Animals straying from Jerusalem on any side as far as from Jerusalem to Midgal Eder were offered in sacrifice. It was a settled conviction among the Jews that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, and equally that he was to be revealed from Midgal Eder."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What king was a native of Bethlehem? By whom was he there anointed king? What prophet was a shepherd?

From the Old Testament Lessons to the New. The final impression that should remain from the study of the Old Testament lessons is that while men and women are constantly falling into sin, God is always seeking to save them from it. The coming of Christ in human form is God's last and fullest expression of his eternal purpose to keep men from evil and to show them what his purpose for them truly is. If, then, there remains from the sad story of the disobedience of Israel an impression of gloom, there must come from the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior, an impression of joy and courage. Let us come with gladness today to the manger-cradle.—Ozora S. David.

The Date of Christ's Birth. The exact time of the birth of Christ is uncertain, but December 25, B. C. 5, is commonly assumed to be the day. In the sixth century the system of chronology was changed and the years after Christ's birth were dated "in the year of our Lord," *Anno Domini,* A. D., but the date is B. C. "Years are now reckoned, not from the beginning of the world, nor from the beginning of our country, but from the birth of Christ. Those who have traveled in mountainous countries know how the highest crest of the mountain range is always shown by seeing from one point, and that point only, the streams dividing on either side; even so it is with the event of this day. There is a before Christ in history; there is a Christ in history; but there is no after Christ in history. Every year that has marched in the columns of time since Christ was born has given itself to the glory and the name of Christ."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

It is eighty miles from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, and the journey must have taken Mary and Joseph several days. They went across Galilee to the Jordan, and then down the Jordan Valley on the east side till they came almost to the upper end of the Dead Sea, where they turned westward across the Jordan and went up the steep road to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Their way led over the fields and up the steep, carefully terraced slope of the long narrow ridge on which Bethlehem is located, five miles southwest of Jerusalem. When they came to the little town they found only one long street lined with flat-roofed, one-story houses built of clay. These houses did not have windows facing the street; each had a door, or gateway, leading into a central yard around which the house was built and toward which its rooms faced. Under the same roof was often a room with rude stalls where cows and oxen were kept.

In the limestone rock of Bethlehem are many caves, and these were sometimes

used as stables. Today there is a church in Bethlehem called the Church of the Nativity because it is built over the traditional site of the manger in which the Infant Jesus was laid. It is the most prominent building there, and is surrounded by fortress-like convent buildings.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Read the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke without any theory; read it as if you had never seen it before, and let the story tell itself to your heart. Let the simple majesty of its beauty and the ineffable music of its lines steal over your mind, and you will enter once more the soul of youth. It will awaken within you the child that is never lost, but only blurred, in the man and woman. No wisdom find we there save that of innocence and beauty. There we learn that we are of finer stuff than old Time has turned us into—such stuff as dreams are made of, and that in what men call dreamland is our true home. And tell me if that sweet old story, so far from being a dream woven on the loom of faith, is not a calm, sober, and wonderfully restrained history! It is a leaf let fall from the Book of Life—as good an account as can be put into mortal words of the origin of such a Being as Jesus.—Joseph Fort Newton.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PROMISED ERA OF PEACE

Beginning the Lesson. In Bethlehem today the celebration of the birth of Jesus begins at eleven in the evening and lasts nearly all night. Men, women and children sit upon the marble floor of the Church of the Nativity and listen to the music of monks and priests, and watch the passing to and fro of bishops and archbishops attired in glittering robes embroidered with gold and silver. At midnight there is silence as the bells peal forth the hour, and then as the "Gloria in Excelsis" is exultantly sung, a curtain is drawn aside and from above the chancel a little silver cradle containing a wax image of the Babe is reverently lowered and carried at the head of the procession to the Chapel of the Manger below the church. All the bishops and archbishops follow, behind them the consuls from Jerusalem in their official costumes, then long rows of chanting priests, two by two, and finally the members of the congregation, all carrying lighted tapers.

It is a beautiful picture which Luke paints for us: the weary travelers, the crowded inn, the humble refuge; the mother and the Babe, whose coming is announced by that triumphant song of the heavenly host, In Excelsis Gloria.

When Cryst was born of Mary fre
In Bethlehem, that fayr cyte,
Angells sang wyth myrth and gle
in exclesis gloria.

Herdmen beheld thes angellis bryght,
To them apperyd wyth gret lyght,
And sayd, "Goddys sone is born this nyght
in exclesis gloria.

Thys keng ys comyn to save kynde
As in scripturas we fynde,
Therefore this song have we in mynde,
in exclesis gloria.

Then Lord, for thy gret grace,
Grant us the blys to se they face,
Where we may sing to thy solas,
in excelsis gloria.

The Prince of Peace. Has the Figure who came at Christmas, and whose life story is told in the four tiny books we call the Gospels, the program that will destroy unemployment, feed children, give to China unity, and Russia freedom? Has he in his hand the key to world-peace?

To stand on a ridge of contemplation and think of the unspeakable good that would come by the ample practice of his ideals is to be dazzled. In the present hour we see, like a colossal and brooding cloud over the heads of men today throughout the world, untold suffering through preventable disease. Millions upon millions of men and women struggle from childhood to the grave walking always perilously

on the edge of a precipice of starvation. In non-Christian lands dread, non-existent demons and the shackles of senseless and cruel customs charge with terror and suffering the lives of the whole continents and islands.

But if love were at the helm these horrors would disappear. There would, of course, still be relatively advanced and backward races of mankind. But the cruel exploitation of the defenseless by the powerful would be replaced by the trusteeship of the strong for the weak. Nor would subject races any longer ferment the explosive leaven of rebellion, for freedom would have come to those whose now enlightened minds and trained characters were equipped for self-government.

Nothing short of a world-propaganda of the message of Christmas to all men of every race everywhere will suffice. The landscape of the great Armageddon of ideas and ideals is stupendous, for it covers the whole world. And the road between our day and the ultimate soaring of "Love triumphant" may be a long road. But the vista of world-victory is there.—Basil Mathews.

The Condition of Peace. "And on earth, peace." We have been so concerned for it that we have overlooked the rest of that song—"among men of good will." The world has never been taught much about that part of it. We have fatally erred in that we have expected the promise—nay, even demanded the promise—to be fulfilled the while we have mostly ignored the sole condition on which it was given. We have put forth far greater effort to compel peace than we have to create good will and justice and kindly dealing. We have tried far harder to adjust harmoniously the clashing interests of selfish and spiteful classes and races than we have to merge all classes and races into one common humanity. We have had far more to say about the worth of love than we have about the worth of those whom we should be loving. We have praised the strong much more than we have praised the kind. It is as if we had spent our lifetime in eulogizing health, the while we violated every law of hygiene.

The war in Europe was no accident. It was the inevitable outcome of racial antipathy centuries old, material ambition, international distrust and suspicion, and a perverted and utterly selfish idea of national relationships. The old order has utterly failed to find a basis for peace. It must be supplanted by something infinitely more sweeping and fundamental than a few peace schemes. Treaties, alliances, disarmaments—such programs will fail, as they always have failed, until there comes to be good will among all classes and peoples. Where this is lacking, friction and misunderstanding will increase and grievances will multiply until the final break must come.—Alva Martin Kerr, in The American Magazine.

Our Part. The author of Jeanne Marie's Triumph speaks through the lips of her heroine as follows:

We say the diplomats have messed things up. They can't make peace! We must make it! Every one of us must make his share—do his utmost, as they did who bled and died "out there." And we must make it in the same spirit in which they fought for it—sacrifice and service. Not "every man for himself," but "every man for others." Not "What can I get out of this?" but "What can I do or give, that will make the world safer and better to live in?"

A Revised Preamble to our Constitution. Dr. Robert McElroy suggests restating the preamble of the American Constitution as follows:

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish universal justice, insure world-wide tranquillity, provide for the world's common defense, promote the world's general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to all mankind, do hereby ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America, pledging our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor, not to our own immediate gain, but to world-wide peace and prosperity, conscious of the fact that our vital interests and those of all other nations are one and inseparable."

A Prayer for Christmas. "On this day of Gladness, we come with willing feet to thy house, Almighty God, that we may give thee thanks for the inestimable gift of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We would bow down in adoration with the believers of many ages and centuries, who have found in him light and life, the wisdom that illumines the mind and the supreme example which discloses the paths of holy conduct. We pray for the whole human family, the least of whom is included in his love. May tender and affectionate tempers displace all harshness, wrath and bitterness. May the envies and jealousies which divide men give place

to the magnanimities which unite them. May the divine message of peace and good will find new interpretation in the thoughts of men of all nations. And thus may the day come speedily when all nations shall live in true neighborhood, united in the will for common good, and dedicated to the Kingdom of God on earth."

For Discussion. 1. The first simple, broad, pervading sentiment of Christmas Day ought to be of how sacred and high this human life is into which the Lord was born.—Phillips Brooks.

2. There should be an intellectual demobilization as well as a military demobilization. We are not likely to improve our own condition or help humanity very much until we come to the sympathetic understanding that human nature is about the same everywhere, that it is rather evenly distributed over the surface of the earth, and that we are all united in a common brotherhood.—Calvin Coolidge.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Beginning the Lesson. Whose birthdays do Americans celebrate? Why do we remember the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln? People of other nations celebrate birthdays of their own great men. Whose birthday alone is remembered in every part of the world by people of every race and nation? Why?

There is a beautiful legend that when Jesus lived as a boy and young man in Nazareth, the people, when in trouble, would say, "Come, let us go and look on Mary's Son." It did them good just to look upon the face of Jesus. It will do us good now to go to Bethlehem with the shepherds of old and look upon the face of the young Babe who came as God's great gift to all the world.

An African Girl's Prayer. "O thou Great Chief, light a candle within our hearts that we may see what is therein and sweep the rubbish from thy dwelling place."

This was the prayer of an African school-girl in a little school on the forest uplands of Northern Rhodesia.

It was Christmas Eve in our school compound, and the girls gave a representation of the Nativity in symbolic scenes. The shining light of moon and stars lit up the wondering faces of a silent throng of people gathered there. From a little round-thatched shelter in the center the light blazed forth, and around the quiet figure of an African girl holding a little peaceful babe there knelt those who had come out of the shadows from north and south, east and west. There were shepherds and kings, little eager children and seeking women—the whole hungering, wistful world of Africa represented there. When the last sweet notes of their song died away, they rose to go, but not empty-handed—each one carried with her a little lighted candle. The darkness now was broken by innumerable gleams of light; the soft yellow glow made beautiful the rapt faces of children as they guarded the flickering flame in steady hands. For each child the way was clear, stones in the path were revealed, she could walk without fear and stumbling. Perhaps it was that picture before the child's eyes that called forth that prayer of hers; it is the picture in our hearts as we live our life among the girls in our school village.—Mabel Shaw, in The International Review of Missions.

Good Tidings of Great Joy. Several years ago an ocean steamer was dashed against the rocks off the coast of Newfoundland, and almost all the passengers lost their lives. A telegram was sent to a home in Detroit announcing the drowning of the young man of the household; but a few hours afterward there came a second dispatch that said, "Saved," and was signed by the young man himself. That dispatch brought such gladness to his wife and mother that they framed it and hung it on the wall of their home.

The message sent on the first Christmas Day announced the birth of the Savior, and it was sent as "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." The Savior came to earth and lived and suffered and died that all men through him might be saved. Such a glad message should be cherished and framed in the heart of every one who believes the good news.

There Is Born to You This Day a Savior, Who Is Christ the Lord. One dark night a young German soldier posted at a sentry-box before the barracks, heard the hoof-beats of his Captain's horse. He went quickly out and offered his

salute and then stood there like a marble statue till the Captain called out: "What use to me are your tokens of respect this dark night; open the gate, so that I can ride in." Is there not a lesson here for us? Of what use to our Master are all the honors we pay him at this season if we do not give him entrance into our hearts?

Do Something about It. A little boy was playing one day in the room where his father was, and of a sudden he left his toys and came and climbed up on his father's chair. "Daddy," he said, "I love you, and I want to do something about it!"

What could he do to show his love to him? His father told him that the very best thing his boy could do for him was to be very loving to the one that both of them loved best, which was his mother; and his father taught him some of the ways in which he could do something about that.

Then there was another thing his father told him. He said that the love of God is just like the kind of love the little boy wanted to show. It is a love that is always "doing something about it."

At Christmas time especially we remember that. For the Father in heaven saw that his children here on earth needed some one to teach them to be good, and so to be glad and happy; and he gave the one greatest gift he had. He gave his own best beloved Son to come down to be a Babe in Bethlehem, and to be a boy in Nazareth, and to grow into the Man who went about doing good everywhere—helping people who had done wrong to want to be good, helping the poor to feel rich because he loved them, helping everybody to learn how beautiful life could be when they lived it in his way. So God, who loved the world, "did something about it," and Jesus, the Son of God, went everywhere making men remember that love because he remembered it, too.

And at Christmas time we must learn the lesson of that love of God. He has loved us and given us all the beautiful gift of the life of Jesus. And we must "do something about it." And the best way of all to show that we love him is—"To try his works to do."—Condensed from The Armor of Youth, by W. Russell Bowie.

Helping to Bring Peace on Earth. Ninety boys, representing ten different nationalities—American, English, Swiss, Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, Czecho-Slovakians, Belgians, Austrians and Chinese—attended the International Camp for older boys which was held on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland. A Chinese boy, who had been studying the Bible with the aid of a Belgian, said at the close of camp: "Somehow in this camp I have come across something different from anything I have seen before; there is a fine spirit here, and if that is the spirit of Christianity, I am going to study Christianity in the future, so that I, too, may get that spirit."

On the last day of the camp the boys met around the Camp Fire and threw into the flames the sticks on which they had cut their names, thus symbolizing their purpose of standing together for international peace and of working together to help attain it.

Sentence Sermons.

"Father of all, our grateful thanks we bring,
For this glad Christmas with its merry joy;
For the dear Christ-child sent to us from heaven,
Given by thy love, a little baby Boy."

Let all strife and hatred cease:
Kindness, love, good will and peace—
Thus we keep the Christmas time.—C. E. Brooks.

I wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas tide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth.
Be this, good friends our carol still:
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.—W. M. Thackeray.

Note. This year's lessons will be studied next year in the Philippines and in Korea. If you have no further use for this volume, why not send it to a missionary in one of these lands? For an address, write to The Surplus Department; World's Sunday School Association, Metropolitan Tower, New York.

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